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LADY SUSAN

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LADY SUSAN

BY

JANE AUSTEN

Written about 1805

First Published in 1871

NOW REPRINTED FROM
THE MANUSCRIPT

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1925

Salem Academy and College
Gramley Library
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27108

Oxford University Press
London Edinburgh Glasgow Copenhagen
New York Toronto Melbourne Cape Town
Bombay Calcutta Madras Shanghai
Humphrey Milford Publisher to the UNIVERSITY

Printed in England

PREFACE

NOTHING is known of *Lady Susan* except what may be learned from the author's manuscript. Miss Austen wrote a fair copy of the piece on paper bearing watermarks of 1805. She gave it no title. The manuscript was given, doubtless by Jane Austen's sister Cassandra, to their niece Lady Knatchbull, better known to readers of Jane's Letters as Fanny Knight. By Lady Knatchbull's permission it was published in 1871, when James Edward Austen-Leigh appended it, with *The Watsons* and other fragments, to the second edition of his Memoir of Jane Austen. He does not tell us whether the title was traditional or was of his own devising.

The story is now reprinted from the autograph by the courtesy of its present owner, the Earl of Rosebery. It has been twice collated, and it is hoped that the text is now finally established.

J
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The manuscript, unlike those of *Sanditon* and *The Watsons*, is not a draft but a fair copy. It is beautifully written, and almost free from correction or erasure. There are 80 quarto leaves, of which the first is blank; the remainder consists of 158 numbered pages. The leaves, which have been slightly trimmed, and mounted, measure $7\frac{1}{2}$ by $6\frac{1}{8}$ inches. The watermarks are for the most part of the ornamental kind; but several leaves bear the maker's name, Sharp, and two bear the date, 1805.

LADY SUSAN

LETTER 1.

Lady Susan Vernon to Mr Vernon.

Langford, Decr.

My dear Brother

I can no longer refuse myself the pleasure of profitting by your kind invitation when we last parted, of spending some weeks with you at Churchill, & therefore if quite convenient to you & Mrs Vernon to receive me at present, I shall hope within a few days to be introduced to a Sister whom I have so long desired to be acquainted with. My kind friends here are most affectionately urgent with me to prolong my stay, but their hospitable & chearful dispositions lead them too much into

 society

society for my present situation & state of mind; & I impatiently look forward to the hour when I shall be admitted into your delightful retirement. I long to be made known to your dear little Children, in whose hearts I shall be very eager to secure an interest. I shall soon have occasion for all my fortitude, as I am on the point of separation from my own daughter. The long illness of her dear Father prevented my paying her that attention which Duty & affection equally dictated, & I have but too much reason to fear that the Governess to whose care I consigned her, was unequal to the charge. I have therefore resolved on placing her at one of the best Private Schools in Town, where I shall have an opportunity of leaving her myself, in my way to you. I am determined you see, not to be denied admittance at

Churchill

Churchill. It would indeed give me most painful sensations to know that it were not in your power to receive me.

Yr most obliged & affec: Sister

S. Vernon.

LETTER 2d.

Lady Susan to Mrs Johnson.

Langford.

You were mistaken my dear Alicia, in supposing me fixed at this place for the rest of the winter. It greives me to say how greatly you were mistaken, for I have seldom spent three months more agreably than those which have just flown away. At present nothing goes smoothly. The Females of the Family are united against me. You foretold how it would be, when I first came to

Langford

Langford; and Manwaring is so uncommonly pleasing that I was not without apprehensions myself. I remember saying to myself as I drove to the House, "I like this Man; pray Heaven no harm come of it!" But I was determined to be discreet, to bear in mind my being only four months a widow, & to be as quiet as possible,— & I have been so; My dear Creature, I have admitted no one's attentions but Manwaring's, I have avoided all general flirtation whatever, I have distinguished no Creature besides of all the Numbers resorting hither, except Sir James Martin, on whom I bestowed a little notice in order to detach him from Miss Manwaring. But if the World could know my motive *there*, they would honour me. I have been called an unkind Mother, but it was the sacred impulse of maternal affection,

it

it was the advantage of my Daughter that led me on; and if that Daughter were not the greatest simpleton on Earth, I might have been rewarded for my Exertions as I ought.—Sir James did make proposals to me for Frederica—but Frederica, who was born to be the torment of my life, chose to set herself so violently against the match, that I thought it better to lay aside the scheme for the present. I have more than once repented that I did not marry him myself, & were he but one degree less contemptibly weak I certainly should, but I must own myself rather romantic in that respect, & that Riches only, will not satisfy me. The event of all this is very provoking. Sir James is gone, Maria highly incensed, and M^rs^ Manwaring insupportably jealous; so jealous in short, & so enraged against me, that in the fury of her

her temper I should not be surprised at her appealing to her Guardian if she had the liberty of addressing him—but there your Husband stands my friend, & the kindest, most amiable action of his Life was his throwing her off forever on her Marriage. Keep up his resentment therefore I charge you. We are now in a sad state; no house was ever more altered; the whole family are at war, & Manwaring scarcely dares speak to me. It is time for me to be gone; I have therefore determined on leaving them, & shall spend I hope a comfortable day with you in Town within this week. If I am as little in favour with Mr Johnson as ever, you must come to me at No 10 Wigmore St—but I hope this may not be the case, for as Mr Johnson with all his faults is a Man to whom that great word "Respectable" is always given, & I am known to be so intimate

intimate with his wife, his slighting me has an awkward Look. I take Town in my way to that insupportable spot, a Country Village, for I am really going to Churchill. Forgive me my dear friend, it is my last resource. Were there another place in England open to me, I would prefer it. Charles Vernon is my aversion, & I am afraid of his wife. At Churchill however I must remain till I have something better in veiw. My young Lady accompanies me to Town, where I shall deposit her under the care of Miss Summers in Wigmore Street, till she becomes a little more reasonable. She will make good connections there, as the Girls are all of the best Families. The price is immense, & much beyond what I can ever attempt to pay.

Adeiu. I will send you a line, as soon as I arrive in Town.—Yours Ever,

S. Vernon.

LETTER

LETTER 3.

Mrs Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

Churchill.

My dear Mother

I am very sorry to tell you that it will not be in our power to keep our promise of spending the Christmas with you; & we are prevented that happiness by a circumstance which is not likely to make us any amends. Lady Susan in a letter to her Brother, has declared her intention of visiting us almost immediately—& as such a visit is in all probability merely an affair of convenience, it is impossible to conjecture it's length. I was by no means prepared for such an event, nor can I now account for her Ladyship's conduct. Langford appeared so exactly the place for her in every respect, as well

well from the elegant & expensive stile of Living there, as from her particular attachment to Mrs Manwaring, that I was very far from expecting so speedy a distinction, tho' I always imagined from her increasing friendship for us since her Husband's death, that we should at some future period be obliged to receive her. Mr Vernon I think was a great deal too kind to her, when he was in Staffordshire. Her behaviour to him, independant of her general Character, has been so inexcusably artful and ungenerous since our Marriage was first in agitation, that no one less amiable & mild than himself could have overlooked it at all; & tho' as his Brother's widow & in narrow circumstances it was proper to render her pecuniary assistance, I cannot help thinking his pressing invitation to her to visit us at Churchill perfectly un-

 necessary

necessary. Disposed however as he always is to think the best of every one, her display of Greif, & professions of regret, & general resolutions of prudence were sufficient to soften his heart, & make him really confide in her sincerity. But as for myself, I am still unconvinced; & plausibly as her Ladyship has now written, I cannot make up my mind, till I better understand her real meaning in coming to us. You may guess therefore my dear Madam, with what feelings I look forward to her arrival. She will have occasion for all those attractive Powers for which she is celebrated, to gain any share of my regard; & I shall certainly endeavour to guard myself against their influence, if not accompanied by something more substantial. She expresses a most eager desire of being acquainted with me, & makes very

gracious

gracious mention of my children, but I am not quite weak enough to suppose a woman who has behaved with inattention if not unkindness to her own child, should be attached to any of mine. Miss Vernon is to be placed at a school in Town before her Mother comes to us, which I am glad of, for her sake and my own. It must be to her advantage to be separated from her Mother; & a girl of sixteen who has received so wretched an education would not be a very desirable companion here. Reginald has long wished I know to see this captivating Lady Susan, & we shall depend on his joining our party soon. I am glad to hear that my Father continues so well, & am, with best Love &c.,

CATH. VERNON.

LETTER

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LETTER 4.

M^r De Courcy to M^rs Vernon.

Parklands.

My dear Sister

I congratulate you & M^r Vernon on being about to receive into your family, the most accomplished Coquette in England. As a very distinguished Flirt, I have been always taught to consider her; but it has lately fallen in my way to hear some particulars of her conduct at Langford, which prove that she does not confine herself to that sort of honest flirtation which satisfies most people, but aspires to the more delicious gratification of making a whole family miserable. By her behaviour to M^r Manwaring, she gave jealousy & wretchedness to his wife, & by her attentions to a young Man previously

previously attached to Mr Manwaring's sister, deprived an amiable girl of her Lover. I learnt all this from a Mr Smith now in this neighbourhood—(I have dined with him at Hurst & Wilford)—who is just come from Langford, where he was a fortnight in the house with her Ladyship, & who is therefore well qualified to make the communication.

What a Woman she must be! I long to see her, & shall certainly accept your kind invitation, that I may form some idea of those bewitching powers which can do so much—engaging at the same time & in the same house the affections of two Men who were neither of them at liberty to bestow them—& all this, without the charm of Youth. I am glad to find that Miss Vernon does not come with her Mother to Churchill, as she has not even Manners to recommend

her

her, & according to Mr Smith's account, is equally dull & proud. Where Pride & Stupidity unite, there can be no dissimulation worthy notice, & Miss Vernon shall be consigned to unrelenting contempt; but by all that I can gather, Lady Susan possesses a degree of captivating Deceit which it must be pleasing to witness & detect. I shall be with you very soon, & am

your affec. Brother R. De Courcy.

LETTER 5.

Lady Susan to Mrs Johnson.

Churchill.

I received your note my dear Alicia, just before I left Town, & rejoice to be assured that Mr Johnson suspected nothing of your engagement the evening

ing before ; it is undoubtedly better to deceive him entirely ; since he will be stubborn, he must be tricked. I arrived here in safety, & have no reason to complain of my reception from Mr Vernon ; but I confess myself not equally satisfied with the behaviour of his Lady. She is perfectly well bred indeed, & has the air of a woman of fashion, but her Manners are not such as can persuade me of her being prepossessed in my favour. I wanted her to be delighted at seeing me—I was as amiable as possible on the occasion—but all in vain—she does not like me. To be sure, when we consider that I *did* take some pains to prevent my Brother-in-law's marrying her, this want of cordiality is not very surprising—& yet it shews an illiberal & vindictive spirit to resent a project which influenced me six years ago, & which never

never succeeded at last. I am sometimes half disposed to repent that I did not let Charles buy Vernon Castle when we were obliged to sell it, but it was a trying circumstance, especially as the sale took place exactly at the time of his marriage—& everybody ought to respect the delicacy of those feelings, which could not endure that my Husband's Dignity should be lessened by his younger brother's having possession of the Family Estate. Could Matters have been so arranged as to prevent the necessity of our leaving the Castle, could we have lived with Charles & kept him single, I should have been very far from persuading my husband to dispose of it elsewhere; but Charles was then on the point of marrying Miss De Courcy, & the event has justified me. Here are Children in abundance, & what benefit could have accrued

accrued to me from his purchasing Vernon? My having prevented it, may perhaps have given his wife an unfavourable impression—but where there is a disposition to dislike a motive will never be wanting; & as to money-matters, it has not with-held him from being very useful to me. I really have a regard for him, he is so easily imposed on!

The house is a good one, the Furniture fashionable, & everything announces plenty & elegance. Charles is very rich I am sure; when a Man has once got his name in a Banking House he rolls in money. But they do not know what to do with their fortune, keep very little company, and never go to Town but on business. We shall be as stupid as possible. I mean to win my Sister in law's heart through her Children; I know all their names al-

ready, & am going to attach myself with the greatest sensibility to one in particular, a young Frederic, whom I take on my lap & sigh over for his dear Uncle's sake.

Poor Manwaring!—I need not tell you how much I miss him—how perpetually he is in my Thoughts. I found a dismal letter from him on my arrival here, full of complaints of his wife & sister, & lamentations on the cruelty of his fate. I passed off the letter as his wife's, to the Vernons, & when I write to him, it must be under cover to you.

Yours Ever, S. V.

LETTER

LETTER 6.

Mrs Vernon to Mr De Courcy.

Churchill.

Well my dear Reginald, I have seen this dangerous creature, & must give you some description of her, tho' I hope you will soon be able to form your own judgement. She is really excessively pretty. However you may chuse to question the allurements of a Lady no longer young, I must for my own part declare that I have seldom seen so lovely a Woman as Lady Susan. She is delicately fair, with fine grey eyes & dark eyelashes ; & from her appearance one would not suppose her more than five & twenty, tho' she must in fact be ten years older. I was certainly not disposed to admire her, tho' always

hearing

hearing she was beautiful ; but I cannot help feeling that she possesses an uncommon union of Symmetry, Brilliancy and Grace. Her address to me was so gentle, frank & even affectionate, that if I had not known how much she has always disliked me for marrying Mr Vernon, & that we had never met before, I should have imagined her an attached friend. One is apt I beleive to connect assurance of manner with coquetry, & to expect that an impudent address will necessarily attend an impudent mind ; at least I was myself prepared for an improper degree of confidence in Lady Susan ; but her Countenance is absolutely sweet, & her voice & manner winningly mild. I am sorry it is so, for what is this but Deceit ? Unfortunately one knows her too well. She is clever & agreable, has all that knowledge of the world which

makes

makes conversation easy, & talks very well, with a happy command of Language, which is too often used I beleive to make Black appear White. She has already almost persuaded me of her being warmly attached to her daughter, tho' I have so long been convinced of the contrary. She speaks of her with so much tenderness & anxiety, lamenting so bitterly the neglect of her education, which she represents however as wholly unavoidable, that I am forced to recollect how many successive Springs her Ladyship spent in Town, while her daughter was left in Staffordshire to the care of servants or a Governess very little better, to prevent my beleiving whatever she says.

If her manners have so great an influence on my resentful heart, you may guess how much more strongly they operate on M^r^ Vernon's generous temper

per. I wish I could be as well satisfied as he is, that it was really her choice to leave Langford for Churchill; & if she had not staid three months there before she discovered that her friends' manner of Living did not suit her situation or feelings, I might have beleived that concern for the loss of such a Husband as Mr Vernon, to whom her own behaviour was far from unexceptionable, might for a time make her wish for retirement. But I cannot forget the length of her visit to the Manwarings, & when I reflect on the different mode of Life which she led with them, from that to which she must now submit, I can only suppose that the wish of establishing her reputation by following, tho' late, the path of propriety, occasioned her removal from a family where she must in reality have been particularly happy. Your friend Mr Smith's

Smith's story however cannot be quite true, as she corresponds regularly with M^rs Manwaring; at any rate it must be exaggerated; it is scarcely possible that two men should be so grossly deceived by her at once.

Y^rs &c. CATH. VERNON.

LETTER 7.

Lady Susan to M^rs Johnson.

Churchill.

My dear Alicia

You are very good in taking notice of Frederica, & I am grateful for it as a mark of your friendship; but as I cannot have a doubt of the warmth of that friendship, I am far from exacting so heavy a sacrifice. She is a stupid girl, & has nothing to recommend her. I would not therefore on any account have

have you encumber one moment of your precious time by sending for her to Edward S^{t}, especially as every visit is so many hours deducted from the grand affair of Education, which I really wish to be attended to, while she remains with Miss Summers. I want her to play & sing with some portion of Taste, & a good deal of assurance, as she has *my* hand & arm, & a tolerable voice. *I* was so much indulged in my infant years that I was never obliged to attend to anything, & consequently am without those accomplishments which are now necessary to finish a pretty Woman. Not that I am an advocate for the prevailing fashion of acquiring a perfect knowledge in all the Languages Arts & Sciences; it is throwing time away; to be Mistress of French, Italian, German, Music, Singing, Drawing &c. will gain a Woman some applause

applause, but will not add one Lover to her list. Grace & Manner after all are of the greatest importance. I do not mean therefore that Frederica's acquirements should be more than superficial, & I flatter myself that she will not remain long enough at school to understand anything thoroughly. I hope to see her the wife of Sir James within a twelvemonth. You know on what I ground my hope, & it is certainly a good foundation, for School must be very humiliating to a girl of Frederica's age; and by the bye, you had better not invite her any more on that account, as I wish her to find her situation as unpleasant as possible. I am sure of Sir James at any time, & could make him renew his application by a Line. I shall trouble you meanwhile to prevent his forming any other attachment when he comes to Town; ask him to

your House occasionally, & talk to him about Frederica that he may not forget her.

Upon the whole I commend my own conduct in this affair extremely, & regard it as a very happy mixture of circumspection & tenderness. Some Mothers would have insisted on their daughter's accepting so great an offer on the first overture, but I could not answer it to myself to force Frederica into a marriage from which her heart revolted; & instead of adopting so harsh a measure, merely propose to make it her own choice by rendering her thoroughly uncomfortable till she does accept him. But enough of this tiresome girl.

You may well wonder how I contrive to pass my time here—& for the first week, it was most insufferably dull. Now however, we begin to mend; our party

is

is enlarged by Mrs Vernon's brother, a handsome young Man, who promises me some amusement. There is something about him that rather interests me, a sort of sauciness, of familiarity which I shall teach him to correct. He is lively & seems clever, & when I have inspired him with greater respect for me than his sister's kind offices have implanted, he may be an agreable Flirt. There is exquisite pleasure in subduing an insolent spirit, in making a person pre-determined to dislike, acknowledge one's superiority. I have disconcerted him already by my calm reserve; & it shall be my endeavour to humble the Pride of these self-important De Courcies still lower, to convince Mrs Vernon that her sisterly cautions have been bestowed in vain, & to persuade Reginald that she has scandalously belied me. This project will serve at least to

amuse

amuse me, & prevent my feeling so acutely this dreadful separation from You & all whom I love. Adeiu.

Yours Ever

S. VERNON.

LETTER 8.

Mrs Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

Churchill.

My dear Mother

You must not expect Reginald back again for some time. He desires me to tell you that the present open weather induces him to accept Mr Vernon's invitation to prolong his stay in Sussex that they may have some hunting together. He means to send for his Horses immediately, & it is impossible to say when you may see him in Kent. I will not disguise my sentiments

ments on this change from you my dear Madam, tho' I think you had better not communicate them to my Father, whose excessive anxiety about Reginald would subject him to an alarm which might seriously affect his health & spirits. Lady Susan has certainly contrived in the space of a fortnight to make my Brother like her. In short, I am persuaded that his continuing here beyond the time originally fixed for his return, is occasioned as much by a degree of fascination towards her, as by the wish of hunting with M^r^ Vernon, & of course I cannot receive that pleasure from the length of his visit which my Brother's company would otherwise give me. I am indeed provoked at the artifice of this unprincipled Woman. What stronger proof of her dangerous abilities can be given, than this perversion of Reginald's

nald's Judgement, which when he entered the house was so decidedly against her ? In his last letter he actually gave me some particulars of her behaviour at Langford, such as he received from a Gentleman who knew her perfectly well, which if true must raise abhorrence against her, & which Reginald himself was entirely disposed to credit. His opinion of her I am sure, was as low as of any Woman in England, & when he first came it was evident that he considered her as one entitled neither to Delicacy nor respect, & that he felt she would be delighted with the attentions of any Man inclined to flirt with her.

Her behaviour I confess has been calculated to do away such an idea, I have not detected the smallest impropriety in it,—nothing of vanity, of pretension, of Levity—& she is altogether

gether so attractive, that I should not wonder at his being delighted with her, had he known nothing of her previous to this personal acquaintance; but against reason, against conviction, to be so well pleased with her as I am sure he is, does really astonish me. His admiration was at first very strong, but no more than was natural; & I did not wonder at his being struck by the gentleness & delicacy of her Manners; but when he has mentioned her of late, it has been in terms of more extraordinary praise, and yesterday he actually said, that he could not be surprised at any effect produced on the heart of Man by such Loveliness & such Abilities; & when I lamented in reply the badness of her disposition, he observed that whatever might have been her errors, they were to be imputed to her neglected Education & early Marriage

riage, & that she was altogether a wonderful Woman.

This tendency to excuse her conduct, or to forget it in the warmth of admiration vexes me; & if I did not know that Reginald is too much at home at Churchill to need an invitation for lengthening his visit, I should regret Mr Vernon's giving him any.

Lady Susan's intentions are of course those of absolute coquetry, or a desire of universal admiration. I cannot for a moment imagine that she has anything more serious in veiw, but it mortifies me to see a young Man of Reginald's sense duped by her at all. I am &c.

Cath. Vernon.

LETTER.

LETTER 9.

Mrs Johnson to Lady Susan.

Edward St.

My dearest Friend

I congratulate you on Mr De Courcy's arrival, & advise you by all means to marry him; his Father's Estate is we know considerable, & I beleive certainly entailed. Sir Reginald is very infirm, & not likely to stand in your way long. I hear the young Man well spoken of, & tho' no one can really deserve you my dearest Susan, Mr De Courcy may be worth having. Manwaring will storm of course, but you may easily pacify him. Besides, the most scrupulous point of honour could not require you to wait for *his* emancipation. I have seen Sir

James,—he came to Town for a few days last week, & called several times in Edward Street. I talked to him about you & your daughter, & he is so far from having forgotten you, that I am sure he would marry either of you with pleasure. I gave him hopes of Frederica's relenting, & told him a great deal of her improvements. I scolded him for making Love to Maria Manwaring; he protested that he had been only in joke, & we both laughed heartily at her disappointment, & in short were very agreable. He is as silly as ever.—Yours faithfully

ALICIA.

LETTER

LETTER 10.

Lady Susan to Mrs Johnson.

Churchill.

I am much obliged to you my dear Friend, for your advice respecting Mr De Courcy, which I know was given with the fullest conviction of it's expediency, tho' I am not quite determined on following it. I cannot easily resolve on anything so serious as Marriage, especially as I am not at present in want of money, & might perhaps till the old Gentleman's death, be very little benefited by the match. It is true that I am vain enough to beleive it within my reach. I have made him sensible of my power, & can now enjoy the pleasure of triumphing over a Mind prepared to dislike me, & prejudiced

diced against all my past actions. His sister too, is I hope convinced how little the ungenerous representations of any one to the disadvantage of another will avail, when opposed to the immediate influence of Intellect and Manner. I see plainly that she is uneasy at my progress in the good opinion of her Brother, & conclude that nothing will be wanting on her part to counteract me ; but having once made him doubt the justice of her opinion of me, I think I may defy her.

It has been delightful to me to watch his advances towards intimacy, especially to observe his altered manner in consequence of my repressing by the calm dignity of my deportment, his insolent approach to direct familiarity. My conduct has been equally guarded from the first, & I never behaved less like a Coquette in the whole course of my

my Life, tho' perhaps my desire of dominion was never more decided. I have subdued him entirely by sentiment & serious conversation, & made him I may venture to say at least *half* in Love with me, without the semblance of the most common-place flirtation. Mrs Vernon's consciousness of deserving every sort of revenge that it can be in my power to inflict, for her ill-offices, could alone enable her to perceive that I am actuated by any design in behaviour so gentle and unpretending. Let her think & act as she chuses however; I have never yet found that the advice of a Sister could prevent a young Man's being in love if he chose it. We are advancing now towards some kind of confidence, and in short are likely to be engaged in a kind of platonic friendship. On *my* side, you may be sure of it's never being more, for if

I were not already as much attached to another person as I can be to any one, I should make a point of not bestowing my affection on a Man who had dared to think so meanly of me.

Reginald has a good figure, & is not unworthy the praise you have heard given him, but is still greatly inferior to our friend at Langford. He is less polished, less insinuating than Manwaring, and is comparatively deficient in the power of saying those delightful things which put one in good humour with oneself & all the world. He is quite agreable enough however, to afford me amusement, & to make many of those hours pass very pleasantly which would be otherwise spent in endeavouring to overcome my sister in law's reserve, & listening to her Husband's insipid talk.

Your account of Sir James is most satisfactory

satisfactory, & I mean to give Miss Frederica a hint of my intentions very soon.—Yours &c.

S. Vernon.

LETTER 11.

Mrs Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

I really grow quite uneasy my dearest Mother about Reginald, from witnessing the very rapid increase of Lady Susan's influence. They are now on terms of the most particular friendship, frequently engaged in long conversations together, & she has contrived by the most artful coquetry to subdue his Judgement to her own purposes. It is impossible to see the intimacy between them, so very soon established, without some alarm, tho' I can hardly

suppose

suppose that Lady Susan's veiws extend to marriage. I wish you could get Reginald home again, under any plausible pretence. He is not at all disposed to leave us, & I have given him as many hints of my Father's precarious state of health, as common decency will allow me to do in my own house. Her power over him must now be boundless, as she has entirely effaced all his former ill-opinion, & persuaded him not merely to forget, but to justify her conduct. Mr Smith's account of her proceedings at Langford, where he accused her of having made Mr Manwaring & a young Man engaged to Miss Manwaring distractedly in love with her, which Reginald firmly beleived when he came to Churchill, is now he is persuaded only a scandalous invention. He has told me so in a warmth of manner which spoke his

regret

regret at having ever beleived the contrary himself.

How sincerely do I greive that she ever entered this house! I always looked forward to her coming with uneasiness—but very far was it, from originating in anxiety for Reginald. I expected a most disagreable companion to myself, but could not imagine that my Brother would be in the smallest danger of being captivated by a Woman with whose principles he was so well acquainted, & whose character he so heartily despised. If you can get him away, it will be a good thing.

Y^rs affec:^ly

Cath. Vernon.

LETTER 12.

Sir Reginald De Courcy to his Son.

Parklands.

I know that young Men in general do not admit of any enquiry even from their nearest relations, into affairs of the heart; but I hope my dear Reginald that you will be superior to such as allow nothing for a Father's anxiety, & think themselves privileged to refuse him their confidence & slight his advice. You must be sensible that as an only son & the representative of an ancient Family, your conduct in Life is most interesting to your connections. In the very important concern of Marriage especially, there is everything at stake; your own happiness, that of your Parents, and the credit of your name

name. I do not suppose that you would deliberately form an absolute engagement of that nature without acquainting your Mother & myself, or at least without being convinced that we should approve your choice; but I cannot help fearing that you may be drawn in by the Lady who has lately attached you, to a Marriage, which the whole of your Family, far & near, must highly reprobate.

Lady Susan's age is itself a material objection, but her want of character is one so much more serious, that the difference of even twelve years becomes in comparison of small account. Were you not blinded by a sort of fascination, it would be ridiculous in me to repeat the instances of great misconduct on her side, so very generally known. Her neglect of her husband, her encouragement of other Men, her extravagance

& dissipation were so gross & notorious, that no one could be ignorant of them at the time, nor can now have forgotten them. To our Family, she has always been represented in softened colours by the benevolence of Mr Charles Vernon; and yet in spite of his generous endeavours to excuse her, we know that she did, from the most selfish motives, take all possible pains to prevent his marrying Catherine.

My Years & increasing Infirmities make me very desirous my dear Reginald, of seeing you settled in the world. To the Fortune of your wife, the goodness of my own, will make me indifferent; but her family & character must be equally unexceptionable. When your choice is so fixed as that no objection can be made to either, I can promise you a ready & chearful consent; but it is my Duty to oppose

a Match, which deep Art only could render probable, and must in the end make wretched.

It is possible that her behaviour may arise only from Vanity, or a wish of gaining the admiration of a Man whom she must imagine to be particularly prejudiced against her; but it is more likely that she should aim at something farther. She is poor, & may naturally seek an alliance which must be advantageous to herself. You know your own rights, & that it is out of my power to prevent your inheriting the family Estate. My Ability of distressing you during my Life, would be a species of revenge to which I should hardly stoop under any circumstances. I honestly tell you my Sentiments & Intentions. I do not wish to work on your Fears, but on your Sense & Affection. It would destroy every comfort of my Life, to know

know that you were married to Lady Susan Vernon. It would be the death of that honest Pride with which I have hitherto considered my son, I should blush to see him, to hear of him, to think of him.

I may perhaps do no good, but that of relieving my own mind, by this Letter; but I felt it my Duty to tell you that your partiality for Lady Susan is no secret to your friends, & to warn you against her. I should be glad to hear your reasons for disbeleiving Mr Smith's intelligence; you had no doubt of it's authenticity a month ago.

If you can give me your assurance of having no design beyond enjoying the conversation of a clever woman for a short period, & of yeilding admiration only to her Beauty & Abilities without being blinded by them to her faults, you will restore me to happiness; but

if

if you cannot do this, explain to me at least what has occasioned so great an alteration in your opinion of her.

I am &c.

Regd De Courcy.

LETTER 13.

Lady De Courcy to Mrs Vernon.

Parklands.

My dear Catherine,

Unluckily I was confined to my room when your last letter came, by a cold which affected my eyes so much as to prevent my reading it myself, so I could not refuse your Father when he offered to read it to me, by which means he became acquainted to my great vexation with all your fears about your Brother. I had intended to write to

Reginald

Reginald myself, as soon as my eyes would let me, to point out as well as I could the danger of an intimate acquaintance with so artful a woman as Lady Susan, to a young Man of his age & high expectations. I meant moreover to have reminded him of our being quite alone now, & very much in need of him to keep up our spirits these long winter evenings. Whether it would have done any good, can never be settled now; but I am excessively vexed that Sir Reginald should know anything of a matter which we foresaw would make him so uneasy. He caught all your fears the moment he had read your Letter, and I am sure has not had the business out of his head since; he wrote by the same post to Reginald, a long letter full of it all, & particularly asking an explanation of what he may have heard from Lady Susan to contradict

tradict the late shocking reports. His answer came this morning, which I shall enclose to you, as I think you will like to see it ; I wish it was more satisfactory, but it seems written with such a determination to think well of Lady Susan, that his assurances as to Marriage &c., do not set my heart at ease. I say all I can however to satisfy your Father, & he is certainly less uneasy since Reginald's letter. How provoking it is my dear Catherine, that this unwelcome Guest of yours, should not only prevent our meeting this Christmas, but be the occasion of so much vexation & trouble. Kiss the dear Children for me. Your affec: Mother

C. De Courcy.

LETTER 14.

M^r De Courcy to Sir Reginald.

Churchill.

My dear Sir

I have this moment received your Letter, which has given me more astonishment than I ever felt before. I am to thank my Sister I suppose, for having represented me in such a light as to injure me in your opinion, & give you all this alarm. I know not why she should chuse to make herself & her family uneasy by apprehending an Event, which no one but herself I can affirm, would ever have thought possible. To impute such a design to Lady Susan would be taking from her every claim to that excellent understanding which her bitterest Enemies have never denied her; & equally low must

must sink my pretensions to common sense, if I am suspected of matrimonial veiws in my behaviour to her. Our difference of age must be an insuperable objection, & I entreat you my dear Sir to quiet your mind, & no longer harbour a suspicion which cannot be more injurious to your own peace than to our Understandings.

I can have no veiw in remaining with Lady Susan than to enjoy for a short time (as you have yourself expressed it) the conversation of a Woman of high mental powers. If M^rs^ Vernon would allow something to my affection for herself & her husband in the length of my visit, she would do more justice to us all; but my Sister is unhappily prejudiced beyond the hope of conviction against Lady Susan. From an attachment to her husband which in itself does honour to both, she cannot forgive

forgive those endeavours at preventing their union, which have been attributed to selfishness in Lady Susan. But in this case, as well as in many others, the World has most grossly injured that Lady, by supposing the worst, where the motives of her conduct have been doubtful.

Lady Susan had heard something so materially to the disadvantage of my Sister, as to persuade her that the happiness of M^r^ Vernon, to whom she was always much attached, would be absolutely destroyed by the Marriage. And this circumstance while it explains the true motive of Lady Susan's conduct, & removes all the blame which has been so lavished on her, may also convince us how little the general report of any one ought to be credited, since no character however upright, can escape the malevolence of slander.

If

If my Sister in the security of retirement, with as little opportunity as inclination to do Evil, could not avoid Censure, we must not rashly condemn those who living in the World & surrounded with temptation, should be accused of Errors which they are known to have the power of committing.

I blame myself severely for having so easily beleived the scandalous tales invented by Charles Smith to the prejudice of Lady Susan, as I am now convinced how greatly they have traduced her. As to M^rs^ Manwaring's jealousy, it was totally his own invention; & his account of her attaching Miss Manwaring's Lover was scarcely better founded. Sir James Martin had been drawn in by that young Lady to pay her some attention, & as he is a Man of fortune, it was easy to see that *her* veiws extended to Marriage. It is well

well known that Miss Manwaring is absolutely on the catch for a husband, & no one therefore can pity her, for losing by the superior attractions of another woman, the chance of being able to make a worthy Man completely miserable. Lady Susan was far from intending such a conquest, & on finding how warmly Miss Manwaring resented her Lover's defection, determined, in spite of M^r and M^rs Manwaring's most earnest entreaties, to leave the family. I have reason to imagine that she did receive serious Proposals from Sir James, but her removing from Langford immediately on the discovery of his attachment, must acquit her on that article, with every Mind of common candour. You will, I am sure my dear Sir, feel the truth of this reasoning, & will hereby learn to do justice to the character of a very injured Woman.

I

I know that Lady Susan in coming to Churchill was governed only by the most honourable & amiable intentions. Her prudence & economy are exemplary, her regard for M^r^ Vernon equal even to *his* deserts, & her wish of obtaining my sister's good opinion merits a better return than it has received. As a Mother she is unexceptionable. Her solid affection for her Child is shewn by placing her in hands, where her Education will be properly attended to; but because she has not the blind & weak partiality of most Mothers, she is accused of wanting Maternal Tenderness. Every person of Sense however will know how to value & commend her well directed affection, & will join me in wishing that Frederica Vernon may prove more worthy than she has yet done, of her Mother's tender care.

I have now my dear Sir, written my real sentiments of Lady Susan; you will know from this Letter, how highly I admire her Abilities, & esteem her Character; but if you are not equally convinced by my full & solemn assurance that your fears have been most idly created, you will deeply mortify & distress me.—I am &c.

R. De Courcy.

LETTER 15.

Mrs Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

Churchill.

My dear Mother

I return you Reginald's letter, & rejoice with all my heart that my Father is made easy by it. Tell him so, with my congratulations; but between ourselves, I must own it has only convinced

convinced *me* of my Brother's having no *present* intention of marrying Lady Susan—not that he is in no danger of doing so three months hence. He gives a very plausible account of her behaviour at Langford, I wish it may be true, but his intelligence must come from herself, & I am less disposed to beleive it, than to lament the degree of intimacy subsisting between them, implied by the discussion of such a subject.

I am sorry to have incurred his displeasure, but can expect nothing better while he is so very eager in Lady Susan's justification. He is very severe against me indeed, & yet I hope I have not been hasty in my judgement of her. Poor Woman! tho' I have reasons enough for my dislike, I can not help pitying her at present as she is in real distress, & with too much cause. She

 had

had this morning a letter from the Lady with whom she has placed her daughter, to request that Miss Vernon might be immediately removed, as she had been detected in an attempt to run away. Why, or whither she intended to go, does not appear; but as her situation seems to have been unexceptionable, it is a sad thing & of course highly afflicting to Lady Susan.

Frederica must be as much as sixteen, & ought to know better, but from what her Mother insinuates I am afraid she is a perverse girl. She has been sadly neglected however, & her Mother ought to remember it.

Mr Vernon set off for Town as soon as she had determined what should be done. He is if possible to prevail on Miss Summers to let Frederica continue with her, & if he cannot succeed, to bring her to Churchill for the present, till

till some other situation can be found for her. Her Ladyship is comforting herself meanwhile by strolling along the Shrubbery with Reginald, calling forth all his tender feelings I suppose on this distressing occasion. She has been talking a great deal about it to me, she talks vastly well, I am afraid of being ungenerous or I should say she talks *too* well to feel so very deeply. But I will not look for Faults. She may be Reginald's Wife. Heaven forbid it! —but why should I be quicker sighted than anybody else? Mr Vernon declares that he never saw deeper distress than hers, on the receipt of the Letter— & is his Judgement inferior to mine?

She was very unwilling that Frederica should be allowed to come to Churchill, & justly enough, as it seems a sort of reward to Behaviour deserving very differently. But it was impossible

to

to take her any where else, & she is not to remain here long.

" It will be absolutely necessary, said she, as you my dear Sister must be sensible, to treat my daughter with some severity while she is here ;—a most painful necessity, but I will endeavour to submit to it. I am afraid I have been often too indulgent, but my poor Frederica's temper could never bear opposition well. You must support & encourage me—You must urge the necessity of reproof, if you see me too lenient."

All this sounds very reasonably. Reginald is so incensed against the poor silly Girl ! Surely it is not to Lady Susan's credit that he should be so bitter against her daughter ; his idea of her must be drawn from the Mother's description.

Well, whatever may be his fate, we have

have the comfort of knowing that we have done our utmost to save him. We must commit the event to an Higher Power. Yours Ever &c.

Cath. Vernon.

LETTER 16.

Lady Susan to Mrs Johnson.

Churchill.

Never my dearest Alicia, was I so provoked in my life as by a Letter this morning from Miss Summers. That horrid girl of mine has been trying to run away.—I had not a notion of her being such a little Devil before; she seemed to have all the Vernon Milkiness; but on receiving the letter in which I declared my intentions about Sir James, she actually attempted to elope

elope; at least, I cannot otherwise account for her doing it. She meant I suppose to go to the Clarkes in Staffordshire, for she has no other acquaintance. But she *shall* be punished, she *shall* have him. I have sent Charles to Town to make matters up if he can, for I do not by any means want her here. If Miss Summers will not keep her, you must find me out another school, unless we can get her married immediately. Miss S. writes word that she could not get the young Lady to assign any cause for her extraordinary conduct, which confirms me in my own private explanation of it.

Frederica is too shy I think, & too much in awe of me, to tell tales; but if the mildness of her Uncle *should* get anything from her, I am not afraid. I trust I shall be able to make my story as good as her's. If I am vain of anything

thing, it is of my eloquence. Consideration & Esteem as surely follow command of Language, as Admiration waits on Beauty. And here I have opportunity enough for the exercise of my Talent, as the cheif of my time is spent in Conversation. Reginald is never easy unless we are by ourselves, & when the weather is tolerable, we pace the shrubbery for hours together. I like him on the whole very well, he is clever & has a good deal to say, but he is sometimes impertinent & troublesome. There is a sort of ridiculous delicacy about him which requires the fullest explanation of whatever he may have heard to my disadvantage, & is never satisfied till he thinks he has ascertained the beginning & end of everything.

This is *one* sort of Love—but I confess it does not particularly recommend itself to me. I infinitely prefer the tender

& liberal spirit of Manwaring, which impressed with the deepest conviction of my merit, is satisfied that whatever I do must be right; & look with a degree of contempt on the inquisitive & doubting Fancies of that Heart which seems always debating on the reasonableness of it's Emotions. Manwaring is indeed beyond compare superior to Reginald—superior in everything but the power of being with me. Poor fellow! he is quite distracted by Jealousy, which I am not sorry for, as I know no better support of Love. He has been teizing me to allow of his coming into this country, & lodging somewhere near me *incog.*—but I forbid everything of the kind. Those women are inexcusable who forget what is due to themselves & the opinion of the World.

S. Vernon.

LETTER

LETTER 17.

Mrs Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

Churchill.

My dear Mother

Mr Vernon returned on Thursday night, bringing his neice with him. Lady Susan had received a line from him by that day's post informing her that Miss Summers had absolutely refused to allow of Miss Vernon's continuance in her Academy. We were therefore prepared for her arrival, & expected them impatiently the whole evening. They came while we were at Tea, & I never saw any creature look so frightened in my life as Frederica when she entered the room.

Lady Susan who had been shedding tears before & shewing great agitation at the idea of the meeting, received her

with perfect self-command, & without betraying the least tenderness of spirit. She hardly spoke to her, & on Frederica's bursting into tears as soon ⟨as⟩ we were seated, took her out of the room & did not return for some time ; when she did, her eyes looked very red, & she was as much agitated as before. We saw no more of her daughter.

Poor Reginald was beyond measure concerned to see his fair friend in such distress, & watched her with so much tender solicitude that I, who occasionally caught her observing his countenance with exultation, was quite out of patience. This pathetic representation lasted the whole evening, & so ostentatious & artful a display has entirely convinced me that she did in fact feel nothing.

I am more angry with her than ever since I have seen her daughter. The poor

poor girl looks so unhappy that my heart aches for her. Lady Susan is surely too severe, because Frederica does not seem to have the sort of temper to make severity necessary. She looks perfectly timid, dejected & penitent.

She is very pretty, tho' not so handsome as her Mother, nor at all like her. Her complexion is delicate, but neither so fair, nor so blooming as Lady Susan's—& she has quite the Vernon cast of countenance, the oval face & mild dark eyes, & there is peculiar sweetness in her look when she speaks either to her Uncle or me, for as we behave kindly to her, we have of course engaged her gratitude. Her Mother has insinuated that her temper is untractable, but I never saw a face less indicative of any evil disposition than her's; & from what I now

now see of the behaviour of each to the other, the invariable severity of Lady Susan, & the silent dejection of Frederica, I am led to beleive as heretofore that the former has no real Love for her daughter & has never done her justice, or treated her affectionately.

I have not yet been able to have any conversation with my neice ; she is shy, & I think I can see that some pains are taken to prevent her being much with me. Nothing satisfactory transpires as to her reason for running away. Her kindhearted Uncle you may be sure, was too fearful of distressing her, to ask many questions as they travelled. I wish it had been possible for me to fetch her instead of him; I think I should have discovered the truth in the course of a Thirty mile Journey.

The small Pianoforté has been removed within these few days at Lady Susan's

Susan's request, into her Dressing room, & Frederica spends great part of the day there; *practising* it is called, but I seldom hear any noise when I pass that way. What she does with herself there I do not know, there are plenty of books in the room, but it is not every girl who has been running wild the first fifteen years of her life, that can or will read. Poor Creature! the prospect from her window is not very instructive, for that room overlooks the Lawn you know with the Shrubbery on one side, where she may see her Mother walking for an hour together, in earnest conversation with Reginald. A girl of Frederica's age must be childish indeed, if such things do not strike her. Is it not inexcusable to give such an example to a daughter? Yet Reginald still thinks Lady Susan the best of Mothers —still condemns Frederica as a worthless

less girl! He is convinced that her attempt to run away, proceeded from no justifiable cause, & had no provocation. I am sure I cannot say that it *had*, but while Miss Summers declares that Miss Vernon shewed no sign of Obstinacy or Perverseness during her whole stay in Wigmore S^{t} till she was detected in this scheme, I cannot so readily credit what Lady Susan has made him & wants to make me beleive, that it was merely an impatience of restraint, & a desire of escaping from the tuition of Masters which brought on the plan of an elopement. Oh! Reginald, how is your Judgement enslaved! He scarcely dares even allow her to be handsome, & when I speak of her beauty, replies only that her eyes have no Brilliancy.

Sometimes he is sure that she is deficient in Understanding, & at others that

that her temper only is in fault. In short when a person is always to deceive, it is impossible to be consistent. Lady Susan finds it necessary for her own justification that Frederica should be to blame, & probably has sometimes judged it expedient to accuse her of ill-nature & sometimes to lament her want of sense. Reginald is only repeating after her Ladyship.

I am &c.

CATH. VERNON.

LETTER 18.

From the same to the same.

Churchill.

My dear Madam

I am very glad to find that my description of Frederica Vernon has interested you, for I do beleive her truly deserving

deserving of our regard, & when I have communicated a notion that has recently struck me, your kind impression in her favour will I am sure be heightened. I cannot help fancying that she is growing partial to my brother, I so very often see her eyes fixed on his face with a remarkable expression of pensive admiration! He is certainly very handsome—& yet more —there is an openness in his manner that must be highly prepossessing, & I am sure she feels it so. Thoughtful & pensive in general her countenance always brightens with a smile when Reginald says anything amusing; & let the subject be ever so serious that he may be conversing on, I am much mistaken if a syllable of his uttering, escape her.

I want to make *him* sensible of all this, for we know the power of gratitude

tude on such a heart as his; & could Frederica's artless affection detach him from her Mother, we might bless the day which brought her to Churchill. I think my dear Madam, you would not disapprove of her as a Daughter. She is extremely young to be sure, has had a wretched Education & a dreadful example of Levity in her Mother; but yet I can pronounce her disposition to be excellent, & her natural abilities very good.

Tho' totally without accomplishment, she is by no means so ignorant as one might expect to find her, being fond of books & spending the cheif of her time in reading. Her Mother leaves her more to herself now than she *did*, & I have her with me as much as possible, & have taken great pains to overcome her timidity. We are very good friends, & tho' she never opens her lips before her

Mother, she talks enough when alone with me, to make it clear that if properly treated by Lady Susan she would always appear to much greater advantage. There cannot be a more gentle, affectionate heart, or more obliging manners, when acting without restraint. Her little Cousins are all very fond of her.

Y^rs affec:^ly
CATH. VERNON.

LETTER 19.

Lady Susan to M^rs Johnson.

Churchill.

You will be eager I know to hear something farther of Frederica, & perhaps may think me negligent for not writing before. She arrived with her Uncle

Uncle last Thursday fortnight, when of course I lost no time in demanding the reason of her behaviour, & soon found myself to have been perfectly right in attributing it to my own letter. The purport of it frightened her so thoroughly that with a mixture of true girlish perverseness & folly, without considering that she could not escape from my authority by running away from Wigmore Street, she resolved on getting out of the house, & proceeding directly by the stage to her friends the Clarkes, & had really got as far as the length of two streets in her journey, when she was fortunately miss'd, pursued, & overtaken.

Such was the first distinguished exploit of Miss Frederica Susanna Vernon, & if we consider that it was atchieved at the tender age of sixteen we shall have room for the most flattering

flattering prognostics of her future renown. I am excessively provoked however at the parade of propriety which prevented Miss Summers from keeping the girl; & it seems so extraordinary a peice of nicety, considering what are my daughter's family connections, that I can only suppose the Lady to be governed by the fear of never getting her money. Be that as it may however, Frederica is returned on my hands, and having now nothing else to employ her, is busy in pursueing the plan of Romance begun at Langford. She is actually falling in love with Reginald De Courcy. To disobey her Mother by refusing an unexceptionable offer is not enough; her affections must likewise be given without her Mother's approbation. I never saw a girl of her age, bid fairer to be the sport of Mankind. Her feelings are tolerably

tolerably lively, & she is so charmingly artless in their display, as to afford the most reasonable hope of her being ridiculed & despised by every Man who sees her.

Artlessness will never do in Love matters, & that girl is born a simpleton who has it either by nature or affectation. I am not yet certain that Reginald sees what she is about; nor is it of much consequence; she is now an object of indifference to him, she would be one of contempt were he to understand her Emotions. Her beauty is much admired by the Vernons, but it has no effect on *him*. She is in high favour with her Aunt altogether—because she is so little like myself of course. She is exactly the companion for Mrs. Vernon, who dearly loves to be first, & to have all the sense & all the wit of the Conversation to herself;

Frederica

Frederica will never eclipse her. When she first came, I was at some pains to prevent her seeing much of her Aunt, but I have since relaxed, as I beleive I may depend on her observing the rules I have laid down for their discourse.

But do not imagine that with all this Lenity, I have for a moment given up my plan of her marriage; No, I am unalterably fixed on that point, tho' I have not yet quite resolved on the manner of bringing it about. I should not chuse to have the business brought forward here, & canvassed by the wise heads of M^r & M^rs Vernon; & I cannot just now afford to go to Town. Miss Frederica therefore must wait a little.

Yours Ever

S. Vernon.

LETTER

LETTER 20.

Mrs Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

Churchill.

We have a very unexpected Guest with us at present, my dear Mother. He arrived yesterday. I heard a carriage at the door as I was sitting with my children while they dined, & supposing I should be wanted left the Nursery soon afterwards & was half way down stairs, when Frederica as pale as ashes came running up, & rushed by me into her own room. I instantly followed, & asked her what was the matter. "Oh! cried she, he is come, Sir James is come—& what am I to do?" This was no explanation; I begged her to tell me what she meant. At that moment we were interrupted

interrupted by a knock at the door ; it was Reginald, who came by Lady Susan's direction to call Frederica down. "It is Mr. De Courcy, said she, colouring violently, Mama has sent for me, & I must go."

We all three went down together, & I saw my Brother examining the terrified face of Frederica with surprise. In the breakfast room we found Lady Susan & a young Man of genteel appearance, whom she introduced to me by the name of Sir James Martin, the very person, as you may remember, whom it was said she had been at pains to detach from Miss Manwaring. But the conquest it seems was not designed for herself, or she has since transferred it to her daughter, for Sir James is now desperately in love with Frederica, & with full encouragement from Mama. The poor girl however I am sure dislikes

dislikes him; and tho' his person & address are very well, he appears both to Mr. Vernon & me a very weak young Man.

Frederica looked so shy, so confused, when we entered the room, that I felt for her exceedingly. Lady Susan behaved with great attention to her Visitor, & yet I thought I could perceive that she had no particular pleasure in seeing him. Sir James talked a good deal, & made many civil excuses to me for the liberty he had taken in coming to Churchill, mixing more frequent laughter with his discourse than the subject required; said many things over and over again, & told Lady Susan three times that he had seen M^rs^ Johnson a few Evenings before. He now & then addressed Frederica, but more frequently her Mother. The poor girl sat all this time

 without

without opening her lips; her eyes cast down, & her colour varying every instant, while Reginald observed all that passed, in perfect silence.

At length Lady Susan, weary I believe of her situation, proposed walking, & we left the two Gentlemen together to put on our Pelisses.

As we went upstairs Lady Susan begged permission to attend me for a few moments in my Dressing room, as she was anxious to speak with me in private. I led her thither accordingly, & as soon as the door was closed she said, "I was never more surprised in my life than by Sir James's arrival, & the suddenness of it requires some apology to *You* my dear Sister, tho' to *me* as a Mother, it is highly flattering. He is so warmly attached to my daughter that he could exist no longer without seeing her. Sir James is a young

young Man of an amiable disposition, & excellent character ; a little too much of the *Rattle* perhaps, but a year or two will rectify *that*, & he is in other respects so very eligible a Match for Frederica that I have always observed his attachment with the greatest pleasure, & am persuaded that you & my Brother will give the alliance your hearty approbation. I have never before mentioned the likelihood of it's taking place to any one, because I thought that while Frederica continued at school, it had better not be known to exist ; but now, as I am convinced that Frederica is too old ever to submit to school confinement, and have therefore begun to consider her union with Sir James as not very distant, I had intended within a few days to acquaint yourself and M^r^ Vernon with the whole business. I am sure my dear Sister,

you

you will excuse my remaining silent on it so long, & agree with me that such circumstances, while they continue from any cause in suspense, cannot be too cautiously concealed. When you have the happiness of bestowing your sweet little Catherine some years hence on a Man, who in connection & character is alike unexceptionable, you will know what I feel now; tho' Thank Heaven! you cannot have all my reasons for rejoicing in such an Event. Catherine will be amply provided for, & not like my Frederica endebted to a fortunate Establishment for the comforts of Life."

She concluded by demanding my congratulations. I gave them somewhat awkwardly I beleive; for in fact, the sudden disclosure of so important a matter took from me the power of speaking with any clearness.

She

She thanked me however most affectionately for my kind concern in the welfare of herself & her daughter, & then said,

" I am not apt to deal in professions, my dear M^rs Vernon, & I never had the convenient talent of affecting sensations foreign to my heart; & therefore I trust you will beleive me when I declare that much as I had heard in your praise before I knew you, I had no idea that I should ever love you as I now do; & I must farther say that your friendship towards me is more particularly gratifying, because I have reason to beleive that some attempts were made to prejudice you against me. I only wish that They—whoever they are—to whom I am endebted for such kind intentions, could see the terms on which we now are together, & understand the real affection we feel for each other

other! But I will not detain you any longer. God bless you, for your goodness to me & my girl, & continue to you all your present happiness."

What can one say of such a Woman, my dear Mother?—such earnestness, such solemnity of expression! & yet I cannot help suspecting the truth of everything she said.

As for Reginald, I beleive he does not know what to make of the matter. When Sir James first came, he appeared all astonishment & perplexity. The folly of the young Man, and the confusion of Frederica entirely engrossed him; & tho' a little private discourse with Lady Susan has since had it's effect, he is still hurt I am sure at her allowing of such a Man's attentions to her daughter.

Sir James invited himself with great composure to remain here a few days; hoped

hoped we would not think it odd, was aware of it's being very impertinent, but he took the liberty of a relation, & concluded by wishing with a laugh, that he might be really one soon. Even Lady Susan seemed a little disconcerted by this forwardness;—in her heart I am persuaded, she sincerely wishes him gone.

But something must be done for this poor Girl, if her feelings are such as both her Uncle & I beleive them to be. She must not be sacrificed to Policy or Ambition, she must not be even left to suffer from the dread of it. The Girl, whose heart can distinguish Reginald De Courcy, deserves, however he may slight her, a better fate than to be Sir James Martin's wife. As soon as I can get her alone, I will discover the real Truth, but she seems to wish to avoid me. I hope this does not proceed from anything

anything wrong, & that I shall not find out I have thought too well of her. Her behaviour before Sir James certainly speaks the greatest consciousness & Embarrassment; but I see nothing in it more like Encouragement.

Adeiu my dear Madam,

Y^rs &c.

CATH. VERNON.

LETTER 21.

Miss Vernon to M^r De Courcy.

Sir,

I hope you will excuse this liberty, I am forced upon it by the greatest distress, or I should be ashamed to trouble you. I am very miserable about Sir James Martin, & have no other way in the world of helping myself but by writing to you, for

for I am forbidden ever speaking to my Uncle or Aunt on the subject; & this being the case, I am afraid my applying to you will appear no better than equivocation, & as if I attended only to the letter & not the spirit of Mama's commands, but if *you* do not take my part, & persuade her to break it off, I shall be half-distracted, for I cannot bear him. No human Being but *you* could have any chance of prevailing with her. If you will therefore have the unspeakable great kindness of taking my part with her, & persuading her to send Sir James away, I shall be more obliged to you than it is possible for me to express. I always disliked him from the first, it is not a sudden fancy I assure you Sir, I always thought him silly & impertinent & disagreable, & now he is grown worse than ever. I would rather work for

my bread than marry him. I do not know how to apologise enough for this Letter, I know it is taking so great a liberty, I am aware how dreadfully angry it will make Mama, but I must run the risk. I am Sir, your most Humble Servt

F. S. V.

LETTER 22d.

Lady Susan to Mrs Johnson.

Churchill.

This is insufferable! My dearest friend, I was never so enraged before, & must releive myself by writing to you, who I know will enter into all my feelings. Who should come on Tuesday but Sir James Martin? Guess my astonishment & vexation—for as you well know, I never wished him to be seen

seen at Churchill. What a pity that you should not have known his intentions! Not content with coming, he actually invited himself to remain here a few days. I could have poisoned him; I made the best of it however, & told my story with great success to Mrs. Vernon who, whatever might be her real sentiments, said nothing in opposition to mine. I made a point also of Frederica's behaving civilly to Sir James, & gave her to understand that I was absolutely determined on her marrying him. She said something of her misery, but that was all. I have for some time been more particularly resolved on the Match, from seeing the rapid increase of her affection for Reginald, & from not feeling perfectly secure that a knowledge of *that* affection might not in the end awaken a return. Contemptible as a regard founded only on

on compassion, must make them both, in my eyes, I felt by no means assured that such might not be the consequence. It is true that Reginald had not in any degree grown cool towards me; but yet he had lately mentioned Frederica spontaneously & unnecessarily, & once had said something in praise of her person.

He was all astonishment at the appearance of my visitor; and at first observed Sir James with an attention which I was pleased to see not unmixed with jealousy; but unluckily it was impossible for me really to torment him, as Sir James tho' extremely gallant to me, very soon made the whole party understand that his heart was devoted to my daughter.

I had no great difficulty in convincing De Courcy when we were alone, that I was perfectly justified, all things considered

considered, in desiring the match; & the whole business seemed most comfortably arranged. They could none of them help perceiving that Sir James was no Solomon, but I had positively forbidden Frederica's complaining to Charles Vernon or his wife, & they had therefore no pretence for Interference, though my impertinent Sister I beleive wanted only opportunity for doing so.

Everything however was going on calmly & quietly; & tho' I counted the hours of Sir James's stay, my mind was entirely satisfied with the posture of affairs. Guess then what I must feel at the sudden disturbance of all my schemes, & that too from a quarter, whence I had least reason to apprehend it. Reginald came this morning into my Dressing room, with a very unusual solemnity of countenance, & after some preface informed me in so many words, that

that he wished to reason with me on the Impropriety & Unkindness of allowing Sir James Martin to address my Daughter, contrary to *her* inclination. I was all amazement. When I found that he was not to be laughed out of his design, I calmly required an explanation, & begged to know by what he was impelled, & by whom commissioned to reprimand me. He then told me, mixing in his speech a few insolent compliments & illtimed expressions of Tenderness to which I listened with perfect indifference, that my daughter had acquainted him with some circumstances concerning herself, Sir James, & me, which gave him great uneasiness.

In short, I found that she had in the first place actually written to him, to request his interference, & that on receiving her Letter he had conversed with

with her on the subject of it, in order to understand the particulars & assure himself of her real wishes !

I have not a doubt but that the girl took this opportunity of making downright Love to him ; I am convinced of it, from the manner in which he spoke of her. Much good, may such Love do him ! I shall ever despise the Man who can be gratified by the Passion, which he never wished to inspire, nor solicited the avowal of. I shall always detest them both. He can have no true regard for me, or he would not have listened to her ; And she, with her little rebellious heart & indelicate feelings to throw herself into the protection of a young Man with whom she had scarcely ever exchanged two words before. I am equally confounded at *her* Impudence & *his* Credulity. How dared he beleive what she told him in my disfavour

favour! Ought he not to have felt assured that I must have unanswerable Motives for all that I had done! Where was his reliance on my Sense or Goodness then; where the resentment which true Love would have dictated against the person defaming me, that person, too, a Chit, a Child, without Talent or Education, whom he had been always taught to despise?

I was calm for some time, but the greatest degree of Forbearance may be overcome; & I hope I was afterwards sufficiently keen. He endeavoured, long endeavoured to soften my resentment, but that woman is a fool indeed who while insulted by accusation, can be worked on by compliments. At length he left me, as deeply provoked as myself, & he shewed his anger *more*. I was quite cool, but he gave way to the most violent indignation. I may therefore expect

expect it will the sooner subside; & perhaps his may be vanished for ever, while mine will be found still fresh & implacable.

He is now shut up in his apartment, whither I heard him go, on leaving mine. How unpleasant, one would think, must his reflections be! But some people's feelings are incomprehensible. I have not yet tranquillized myself enough to see Frederica. *She* shall not soon forget the occurrences of this day. She shall find that she has poured forth her tender Tale of Love in vain, & exposed herself forever to the contempt of the whole world, & the severest Resentment of her injured Mother.

Y^rs affec:^ly

S. Vernon.

LETTER 23.

Mrs Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

Churchill.

Let me congratulate you, my dearest Mother. The affair which has given us so much anxiety is drawing to a happy conclusion. Our prospect is most delightful; & since matters have now taken so favourable a turn, I am quite sorry that I ever imparted my apprehensions to you; for the pleasure of learning that the danger is over, is perhaps dearly purchased by all that you have previously suffered.

I am so much agitated by Delight that I can scarcely hold a pen, but am determined to send you a few lines by James, that you may have some explanation of what must so greatly

greatly astonish you, as that Reginald should be returning to Parklands.

I was sitting about half an hour ago with Sir James in the Breakfast parlour, when my Brother called me out of the room. I instantly saw that something was the matter; his complexion was raised, & he spoke with great emotion. You know his eager manner, my dear Madam, when his mind is interested.

"Catherine, said he, I am going home today. I am sorry to leave you, but I must go. It is a great while since I have seen my Father & Mother. I am going to send James forward with my Hunters immediately, if you have any Letter therefore he can take it. I shall not be at home myself till Wednesday or Thursday, as I shall go through London, where I have business. But before I leave you, he continued, speaking in a lower voice & with still greater energy

energy, I must warn you of one thing. Do not let Frederica Vernon be made unhappy by that Martin. He wants to marry her—her Mother promotes the Match—but *she* cannot endure the idea of it. Be assured that I speak from the fullest conviction of the Truth of what I say. I *know* that Frederica is made wretched by Sir James' continuing here. She is a sweet girl, & deserves a better fate. Send him away immediately. *He* is only a fool—but what her Mother can mean, Heaven only knows! Good bye, he added shaking my hand with earnestness—I do not know when you will see me again. But remember what I tell you of Frederica; you *must* make it your business to see justice done her. She is an amiable girl, & has a very superior Mind to what we have ever given her credit for."

He then left me & ran upstairs.

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I would not try to stop him, for I knew what his feelings must be ; the nature of mine as I listened to him, I need not attempt to describe. For a minute or two I remained in the same spot, overpowered by wonder—of a most agreable sort indeed ; yet it required some consideration to be tranquilly happy.

In about ten minutes after my return to the parlour, Lady Susan entered the room. I concluded of course that she & Reginald had been quarrelling, & looked with anxious curiosity for a confirmation of my beleif in her face. Mistress of Deceit however she appeared perfectly unconcerned, & after chatting on indifferent subjects for a short time, said to me, " I find from Wilson that we are going to lose Mr De Courcy. Is it true that he leaves Churchill this morning ? " I replied that it was. " He told us nothing of all

all this last night, said she laughing, or even this morning at Breakfast. But perhaps he did not know it himself. Young Men are often hasty in their resolutions—& not more sudden in forming, than unsteady in keeping them. I should not be surprised if he were to change his mind at last, & not go."

She soon afterwards left the room. I trust however my dear Mother, that we have no reason to fear an alteration of his present plan; things have gone too far. They must have quarrelled, & about Frederica too. Her calmness astonishes me. What delight will be yours in seeing him again, in seeing him still worthy your Esteem, still capable of forming your Happiness!

When I next write, I shall be able I hope to tell you that Sir James is gone, Lady Susan vanquished, & Frederica at

at peace. We have much to do, but it shall be done. I am all impatience to know how this astonishing change was effected. I finish as I began, with the warmest congratulations.

Yrs Ever,

Cath. Vernon.

LETTER 24.

From the same to the same.

Churchill.

Little did I imagine my dear Mother, when I sent off my last letter, that the delightful perturbation of spirits I was then in, would undergo so speedy, so melancholy a reverse! I never can sufficiently regret that I wrote to you at all. Yet who could have foreseen what has happened? My dear Mother, every hope which but two hours ago made

made me so happy, is vanished. The quarrel between Lady Susan & Reginald is made up, & we are all as we were before. One point only is gained; Sir James Martin is dismissed. What are we now to look forward to? I am indeed disappointed. Reginald was all but gone; his horse was ordered, & almost brought to the door! Who would not have felt safe?

For half an hour I was in momentary expectation of his departure. After I had sent off my Letter to you, I went to Mr Vernon & sat with him in his room, talking over the whole matter. I then determined to look for Frederica, whom I had not seen since breakfast. I met her on the stairs & saw that she was crying.

"My dear Aunt, said she, he is going, Mr De Courcy is going, & it is all my fault. I am afraid you will be angry

angry, but indeed I had no idea it would end so."

"My Love, replied I, do not think it necessary to apologize to me on that account. I shall feel myself under an obligation to anyone who is the means of sending my brother home; because, (recollecting myself) I know my Father wants very much to see him. But what is it that *you* have done to occasion all this?"

She blushed deeply as she answered, "I was so unhappy about Sir James that I could not help—I have done something very wrong I know—but you have not an idea of the misery I have been in, & Mama had ordered me never to speak to you or my Uncle about it,—&—" "You therefore spoke to my Brother, to engage *his* interference;" said I, wishing to save her the explanation. "No—but I wrote to

 him

him. I did indeed. I got up this morning before it was light—I was two hours about it—& when my Letter was done, I thought I never should have courage to give it. After breakfast however, as I was going to my own room I met him in the passage, & then as I knew that everything must depend on that moment, I forced myself to give it. He was so good as to take it immediately; I dared not look at him—& ran away directly. I was in such a fright that I could hardly breathe. My dear Aunt, you do not know how miserable I have been."

"Frederica, said I, you ought to have told *me* all your distresses. You would have found in me a friend always ready to assist you. Do you think that your Uncle & I should not have espoused your cause as warmly as my Brother?"

Indeed

" Indeed I did not doubt your goodness, said she, colouring again, but I thought that Mr De Courcy could do anything with my Mother ; but I was mistaken ; they have had a dreadful quarrel about it, & he is going. Mama will never forgive me, & I shall be worse off than ever." " No, you shall not, replied I.—In such a point as this, your Mother's prohibition ought not to have prevented your speaking to me on the subject. She has no right to make you unhappy, & she shall *not* do it. Your applying however to Reginald can be productive only of Good to all parties. I beleive it is best as it is. Depend upon it that you shall not be made unhappy any longer."

At that moment, how great was my astonishment at seeing Reginald come out of Lady Susan's Dressing room. My heart misgave me instantly. His confusion

confusion on seeing me was very evident. Frederica immediately disappeared. "Are you going? said I. You will find Mr Vernon in his own room." "No Catherine, replied he. "I am *not* going. Will you let me speak to you a moment?"

We went into my room. "I find, continued he, his confusion increasing as he spoke, that I have been acting with my usual foolish impetuosity. I have entirely misunderstood Lady Susan, & was on the point of leaving the house under a false impression of her conduct. There has been some very great mistake—we have been all mistaken I fancy. Frederica does not know her Mother—Lady Susan means nothing but her Good—but Frederica will not make a friend of her. Lady Susan therefore does not always know what will make her daughter happy. Besides

Besides, *I* could have no right to interfere—Miss Vernon was mistaken in applying to me. In short Catherine, everything has gone wrong—but it is now all happily settled. Lady Susan I beleive wishes to speak to you about it, if you are at leisure."

"Certainly;" replied I, deeply sighing at the recital of so lame a story. I made no remarks however, for words would have been vain. Reginald was glad to get away, & I went to Lady Susan; curious indeed to hear her account of it.

"Did not I tell you, said she with a smile, that your Brother would not leave us after all?" "You did indeed, replied I very gravely, but I flattered myself that you would be mistaken." "I should not have hazarded such an opinion, returned she, if it had not at that moment occurred

occurred ⟨to⟩ me, that his resolution of going might be occasioned by a Conversation in which we had been this morning engaged, & which had ended very much to his Dissatisfaction from our not rightly understanding each other's meaning. This idea struck me at the moment, & I instantly determined that an accidental dispute in which I might probably be as much to blame as himself, should not deprive you of your Brother. If you remember, I left the room almost immediately. I was resolved to lose no time in clearing up these mistakes as far as I could. The case was this. Frederica had set herself violently against marrying Sir James"—"And can your Ladyship wonder that she should? cried I with some warmth. Frederica has an excellent Understanding, and Sir James has none." "I am at least very far from regretting

regretting it, my dear Sister, said she; on the contrary, I am grateful for so favourable a sign of my Daughter's sense. Sir James is certainly under par—(his boyish manners make him appear the worse)—and had Frederica possessed the penetration, the abilities, which I could have wished in my daughter, or had I even known her to possess so much as she does, I should not have been anxious for the match." "It is odd that you alone should be ignorant of your Daughter's sense." "Frederica never does justice to herself; her manners are shy & childish. She is besides afraid of me; she scarcely loves me. During her poor Father's life she was a spoilt child; the severity which it has since been necessary for me to shew, has entirely alienated her affection; neither has she any of that Brilliancy of Intellect, that Genius, or Vigour of Mind

Mind which will force itself forward." "Say rather that she has been unfortunate in her Education." "Heaven knows my dearest Mrs Vernon, how fully I am aware of *that*; but I would wish to forget every circumstance that might throw blame on the memory of one, whose name is sacred with me."

Here she pretended to cry. I was out of patience with her. "But what, said I, was your Ladyship going to tell me about your disagreement with my Brother?" "It originated in an action of my Daughter's, which equally marks her want of Judgement, and the unfortunate Dread of me I have been mentioning. She wrote to Mr De Courcy." "I know she did. You had forbidden her speaking to Mr Vernon or to me on the cause of her distress; what could she do therefore but apply to my Brother?" "Good God!—she exclaimed

exclaimed, what an opinion must you have of me! Can you possibly suppose that I was aware of her unhappiness? that it was my object to make my own child miserable, & that I had forbidden her speaking to you on the subject, from a fear of your interrupting the Diabolical scheme? Do you think me destitute of every honest, every natural feeling? Am I capable of consigning *her* to everlasting Misery, whose welfare it is my first Earthly Duty to promote?" "The idea is horrible. What then was your intention when you insisted on her silence?" "Of what use my dear Sister, could be any application to you, however the affair might stand? Why should I subject you to entreaties, which I refused to attend to myself? Neither for your sake, for hers, nor for my own, could such a thing be desireable. Where

my own resolution was taken, I could not wish for the interference, however friendly, of another person. I was mistaken, it is true, but I beleived myself to be right." "But what was this mistake, to which your Ladyship so often alludes? From whence arose so astonishing a misapprehension of your Daughter's feelings? Did not you know that she disliked Sir James?" "I knew that he was not absolutely the Man she would have chosen. But I was persuaded that her objections to him did not arise from any perception of his Deficiency. You must not question me however my dear Sister, too minutely on this point—continued she, taking me affectionately by the hand. I honestly own that there is something to conceal. Frederica makes me very unhappy. Her applying to Mr De Courcy hurt me particularly." "What

is

is it that you mean to infer said I, by this appearance of mystery? If you think your daughter at all attached to Reginald, her objecting to Sir James could not less deserve to be attended to, than if the cause of her objecting had been a consciousness of his folly. And why should your Ladyship at any rate quarrel with my brother for an interference which you must know, it was not in his nature to refuse, when urged in such a manner?"

"His disposition you know is warm, & he came to expostulate with me, his compassion all alive for this ill-used Girl, this Heroine in distress! We misunderstood each other. He beleived me more to blame than I really was; I considered his interference as less excusable than I now find it. I have a real regard for him, & was beyond expression mortified to find it as I thought

thought so ill bestowed. We were both warm, & of course both to blame. His resolution of leaving Churchill is consistent with his general eagerness; when I understood his intention however, & at the same time began to think that we had perhaps been equally mistaken in each other's meaning, I resolved to have an explanation before it were too late. For any Member of your Family I must always feel a degree of affection, & I own it would have sensibly hurt me, if my acquaintance with M^r^ De Courcy had ended so gloomily. I have now only to say farther, that as I am convinced of Frederica's having a reasonable dislike to Sir James, I shall instantly inform him that he must give up all hope of her. I reproach myself for having ever, tho' so innocently, made her unhappy on that score. She shall have all the retribution

in

in my power to make; if she value her own happiness as much as I do, if she judge wisely & command herself as she ought, she may now be easy. Excuse me, my dearest Sister, for thus trespassing on your time, but I owed it to my own Character; & after this explanation I trust I am in no danger of sinking in your opinion."

I could have said "Not much indeed;"—but I left her almost in silence. It was the greatest stretch of Forbearance I could practise. I could not have stopped myself, had I begun. Her assurance, her Deceit—but I will not allow myself to dwell on them; they will strike you sufficiently. My heart sickens within me.

As soon as I was tolerably composed, I returned to the Parlour. Sir James's carriage was at the door, & he, merry as usual, soon afterwards took his leave

leave. How easily does her Ladyship encourage, or dismiss a Lover!

In spite of this release, Frederica still looks unhappy, still fearful perhaps of her Mother's anger, & tho' dreading my Brother's departure jealous, it may be, of his staying. I see how closely she observes him & Lady Susan. Poor Girl, I have now no hope for her. There is not a chance of her affection being returned. He thinks very differently of her, from what he used to do, he does her some justice, but his reconciliation with her Mother precludes every dearer hope.

Prepare my dear Madam, for the worst. The probability of their marrying is surely heightened. He is more securely her's than ever. When that wretched Event takes place, Frederica must belong wholly to us.

I am thankful that my last Letter will

will precede this by so little, as every moment that you can be saved from feeling a Joy which leads only to disappointment is of consequence.

Y^rs Ever,

CATH. VERNON.

LETTER 25.

Lady Susan to M^rs Johnson.

Churchill.

I call on you dear Alicia, for congratulations. I am again myself;—gay and triumphant. When I wrote to you the other day, I was in truth in high irritation, and with ample cause. Nay, I know not whether I ought to be quite tranquil now, for I have had more trouble in restoring peace than I ever intended to submit to. This Reginald has a proud spirit of his own

own!—a spirit too, resulting from a fancied sense of superior Integrity which is peculiarly insolent. I shall not easily forgive him I assure you. He was actually on the point of leaving Churchill! I had scarcely concluded my last, when Wilson brought me word of it. I found therefore that something must be done, for I did not chuse to have my character at the mercy of a Man whose passions were so violent and resentful. It would have been trifling with my reputation, to allow of his departing with such an impression in my disfavour; in this light, condescension was necessary.

I sent Wilson to say that I desired to speak with him before he went. He came immediately. The angry emotions which had marked every feature when we last parted, were partially subdued. He seemed astonished at the

summons

summons, and looked as if half wishing and half fearing to be softened by what I might say.

If my Countenance expressed what I aimed at, it was composed and dignified--and yet with a degree of pensiveness which might convince him that I was not quite happy. "I beg your pardon Sir, for the liberty I have taken in sending to you, said I; but as I have just learnt your intention of leaving this place to-day, I feel it my duty to entreat that you will not on my account shorten your visit here, even an hour. I am perfectly aware that after what has passed between us, it would ill suit the feelings of either to remain longer in the same house. So very great, so total a change from the intimacy of Friendship, must render any future intercourse the severest punishment; & your resolution of

quitting Churchill is undoubtedly in unison with our situation & with those lively feelings which I know you to possess. But at the same time, it is not for me to suffer such a sacrifice, as it must be, to leave Relations to whom you are so much attached & are so dear. My remaining here cannot give that pleasure to M^r & M^rs Vernon which your society must; & my visit has already perhaps been too long. My removal therefore, which must at any rate take place soon, may with perfect convenience be hastened; & I make it my particular request that I may not in any way be instrumental in separating a family so affectionately attached to each other. Where *I* go is of no consequence to anyone; of very little to myself; but *you* are of importance to all your connections." Here I concluded, & I hope you will be satisfied with

with my speech. It's effect on Reginald justifies some portion of vanity, for it was no less favourable than instantaneous. Oh! how delightful it was, to watch the variations of his Countenance while I spoke, to see the struggle between returning Tenderness & the remains of Displeasure. There is something agreable in feelings so easily worked on. Not that I envy him their possession, nor would for the world have such myself, but they are very convenient when one wishes to influence the passions of another. And yet this Reginald, whom a very few words from me softened at once into the utmost submission, & rendered more tractable, more attached, more devoted than ever, would have left me in the first angry swelling of his proud heart, without deigning to seek an explanation!

Humbled as he now is, I cannot forgive

forgive him such an instance of Pride; & am doubtful whether I ought not to punish him, by dismissing him at once after this our reconciliation, or by marrying & teizing him for ever. But these measures are each too violent to be adopted without some deliberation. At present my Thoughts are fluctuating between various schemes. I have many things to compass. I must punish Frederica, & pretty severely too, for her application to Reginald; I must punish him for receiving it so favourably, & for the rest of his conduct. I must torment my Sister-in-law for the insolent triumph of her Look & Manner since Sir James has been dismissed—for in reconciling Reginald to me, I was not able to save that ill-fated young Man—& I must make myself amends for the humiliations to which I have stooped within these few days. To

effect

effect all this I have various plans. I have also an idea of being soon in Town, & whatever may be my determination as to the rest, I shall probably put *that* project in execution—for London will be always the fairest field of action, however my veiws may be directed, & at any rate, I shall there be rewarded by your society & a little Dissipation for a ten weeks' penance at Churchill.

I beleive I owe it to my own Character, to complete the match between my daughter & Sir James, after having so long intended it. Let me know your opinion on this point. Flexibility of Mind, a Disposition easily biassed by others, is an attribute which you know I am not very desirous of obtaining; nor has Frederica any claim to the indulgence of her whims, at the expense of her Mother's inclination. Her idle

Love

Love for Reginald too; it is surely my duty to discourage such romantic nonsense. All things considered therefore, it seems encumbent on me to take her to Town, & marry her immediately to Sir James.

When my own will is effected, contrary to his, I shall have some credit in being on good terms with Reginald, which at present in fact I have not, for tho' he is still in my power, I have given up the very article by which our quarrel was produced, & at best, the honour of victory is doubtful.

Send me your opinion on all these matters, my dear Alicia, & let me know whether you can get Lodgings to suit me within a short distance of you.

Y^r^ most attached

S. Vernon.

LETTER

LETTER 26.

Mrs Johnson to Lady Susan.

Edward St.

I am gratified by your reference, & this is my advice; that you come to Town yourself without loss of time, but that you leave Frederica behind. It would surely be much more to the purpose to get yourself well established by marrying Mr De Courcy, than to irritate him & the rest of his family, by making her marry Sir James. You should think more of yourself, & less of your Daughter. She is not of a disposition to do you credit in the World, & seems precisely in her proper place, at Churchill with the Vernons; but *you* are fitted for Society, and it is shameful to have you exiled from it.

Leave

Leave Frederica therefore to punish herself for the plague she has given you, by indulging that romantic tender-heartedness which will always ensure her misery enough; & come yourself to Town, as soon as you can.

I have another reason for urging this.

Manwaring came to town last week, & has contrived, in spite of Mr Johnson, to make opportunities of seeing me. He is absolutely miserable about you, & jealous to such a degree of De Courcy, that it would be highly unadvisable for them to meet at present; & yet if you do not allow him to see you here, I cannot answer for his not committing some great imprudence—such as going to Churchill for instance, which would be dreadful. Besides, if you take my advice, & resolve to marry De Courcy, it will be indispensably necessary for you to get Manwaring out of the way,

&

& you only can have influence enough to send him back to his wife.

I have still another motive for your coming. Mr Johnson leaves London next Tuesday. He is going for his health to Bath, where if the waters are favourable to his constitution & my wishes, he will be laid up with the gout many weeks. During his absence we shall be able to chuse our own society, & have true enjoyment. I would ask you to Edward St but that he once forced from me a kind of promise never to invite you to my house. Nothing but my being in the utmost distress for Money, could have extorted it from me. I can get you however a very nice Drawingroom-apartment in Upper Seymour St, & we may be always together, there or here, for I consider my promise to Mr Johnson as comprehending only (at least in

s his

his absence) your not sleeping in the House.

Poor Manwaring gives me such histories of his wife's jealousy!—Silly Woman, to expect constancy from so charming a Man! But she was always silly; intolerably so, in marrying him at all. She, the Heiress of a large Fortune, he without a shilling! *One* title I know she might have had, besides Baronets. Her folly in forming the connection was so great, that tho' Mr Johnson was her Guardian & I do not in general share his feelings, I never can forgive her.

Adeiu. Yours, Alicia.

LETTER

LETTER 27.

Mrs Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

Churchill.

This Letter my dear Mother, will be brought you by Reginald. His long visit is about to be concluded at last, but I fear the separation takes place too late to do us any good. *She* is going to Town, to see her particular friend, Mrs Johnson. It was at first her intention that Frederica should accompany her for the benefit of Masters, but we over-ruled her there. Frederica was wretched in the idea of going, & I could not bear to have her at the mercy of her Mother. Not all the Masters in London could compensate for the ruin of her comfort. I should have feared too for her health, & for everything in short

short but her Principles; *there* I beleive she is not to be injured, even by her Mother, or all her Mother's friends; but with those friends (a very bad set I doubt not) she must have mixed, or have been left in total solitude, & I can hardly tell which would have been worse for her. If she is with her Mother moreover, she must alas! in all probability, be with Reginald—& that would be the greatest evil of all.

Here we shall in time be at peace. Our regular employments, our Books & conversation, with Exercise, the Children, & every domestic pleasure in my power to procure her, will, I trust, gradually overcome this youthful attachment. I should not have a doubt of it, were she slighted for any other woman in the world, than her own Mother.

How long Lady Susan will be in Town,

or

or whether she returns here again, I know not. I could not be cordial in my invitation; but if she chuses to come, no want of cordiality on my part will keep her away.

I could not help asking Reginald if he intended being in Town this winter, as soon as I found that her Ladyship's steps would be bent thither; and tho' he professed himself quite undetermined, there was a something in his Look and voice as he spoke, which contradicted his words. I have done with Lamentation. I look upon the Event as so far decided, that I resign myself to it in despair. If he leaves you soon for London, everything will be concluded.

Yours affec^ly

CATH. VERNON.

LETTER

LETTER 28.

Mrs Johnson to Lady Susan.

Edward St.

My dearest Friend,

I write in the greatest distress; the most unfortunate event has just taken place. Mr Johnson has hit on the most effectual manner of plaguing us all. He had heard I imagine by some means or other, that you were soon to be in London, & immediately contrived to have such an attack of the Gout, as must at least delay his journey to Bath, if not wholly prevent it. I am persuaded the Gout is brought on, or kept off at pleasure; it was the same, when I wanted to join the Hamiltons to the Lakes; & three years ago when *I* had a fancy for Bath, nothing could induce him to have a Gouty symptom.

I have received yours, & have engaged the Lodgings in consequence. I am pleased to find that my Letter had so much effect on you, & that De Courcy is certainly your own. Let me hear from you as soon as you arrive, & in particular tell me what you mean to do with Manwaring. It is impossible to say when I shall be able to see you. My confinement must be great. It is such an abominable trick, to be ill here, instead of at Bath, that I can scarcely command myself at all. At Bath, his old Aunts would have nursed him, but here it all falls upon me—& he bears pain with such patience that I have not the common excuse for losing my temper.

Yrs Ever,

Alicia.

LETTER

LETTER 29.

Lady Susan to Mrs Johnson.

Upper Seymour St

My dear Alicia

There needed not this last fit of the Gout to make me detest Mr Johnson; but now the extent of my aversion is not to be estimated. To have you confined, a Nurse in his apartment! My dear Alicia, of what a mistake were you guilty in marrying a Man of his age!—just old enough to be formal, ungovernable & to have the Gout—too old to be agreable, & too young to die.

I arrived last night about five, & had scarcely swallowed my dinner when Manwaring made his appearance. I will not dissemble what real pleasure his sight afforded me, nor how strongly

I

I felt the contrast between his person & manners, & those of Reginald, to the infinite disadvantage of the latter. For an hour or two, I was even stagger'd in my resolution of marrying him—& tho' this was too idle & nonsensical an idea to remain long on my mind, I do not feel very eager for the conclusion of my Marriage, or look forward with much impatience to the time when Reginald according to our agreement is to be in Town. I shall probably put off his arrival, under some pretence or other. He must not come till Manwaring is gone.

I am still doubtful at times, as to Marriage. If the old Man would die, I might not hesitate; but a state of dependance on the caprice of Sir Reginald, will not suit the freedom of my spirit; & if I resolve to wait for that event, I shall have excuse enough

at present, in having been scarcely ten months a Widow.

I have not given Manwaring any hint of my intention—or allowed him to consider my acquaintance with Reginald as more than the commonest flirtation ; & he is tolerably appeased. Adeiu till we meet. I am enchanted with my Lodgings.

Y^rs Ever,
S. Vernon.

LETTER 30.

Lady Susan to M^r De Courcy.

Upper Seymour S^t.

I have received your Letter ; & tho' I do not attempt to conceal that I am gratified by your impatience for the hour of meeting, I yet feel myself under the necessity of delaying that hour beyond

beyond the time originally fixed. Do not think me unkind for such an exercise of my power, or accuse me of Instability, without first hearing my reasons. In the course of my journey from Churchill, I had ample leisure for reflection on the present state of our affairs, & every reveiw has served to convince me that they require a delicacy and cautiousness of conduct, to which we have hitherto been too little attentive. We have been hurried on by our feelings to a degree of Precipitance which ill accords with the claims of our Friends, or the opinion of the World. We have been unguarded in forming this hasty Engagement; but we must not complete the imprudence by ratifying it, while there is so much reason to fear the Connection would be opposed by those Friends on whom you depend.

It

It is not for us to blame any expectation on your Father's side of your marrying to advantage; where possessions are so extensive as those of your Family, the wish of increasing them, if not strictly reasonable, is too common to excite surprise or resentment. He has a right to require a woman of fortune in his daughter in law, & I am sometimes quarreling with myself for suffering you to form a connection so imprudent. But the influence of reason is often acknowledged too late by those who feel like me.

I have now been but a few months a widow; & however little endebted to my Husband's memory for any happiness derived from him during an Union of some years, I cannot forget that the indelicacy of so early a second marriage, must subject me to the censure of the World, & incur what would be still more

more insupportable, the displeasure of Mr Vernon. I might perhaps harden myself in time against the injustice of general reproach; but the loss of *his* valued Esteem, I am as you well know, ill fitted to endure; & when to this, may be added the consciousness of having injured you with your Family, how am I to support myself. With feelings so poignant as mine, the conviction of having divided the son from his Parents, would make me, even with *you*, the most miserable of Beings.

It will surely therefore be advisable to delay our Union, to delay it till appearances are more promising, till affairs have taken a more favourable turn. To assist us in such a resolution, I feel that absence will be necessary. We must not meet. Cruel as this sentence may appear, the necessity of pronouncing it, which can alone reconcile

cile it to myself, will be evident to you when you have considered our situation in the light in which I have found myself imperiously obliged to place it. You may be, you must be well assured that nothing but the strongest conviction of Duty, could induce me to wound my own feelings by urging a lengthened separation; & of Insensibility to yours, you will hardly suspect me. Again therefore I say that we ought not, we must not yet meet. By a removal for some Months from each other, we shall tranquillize the sisterly fears of M^rs^ Vernon, who, accustomed herself to the enjoyment of riches, considers Fortune as necessary every where, & whose Sensibilities are not of a nature to comprehend ours.

Let me hear from you soon, very soon. Tell me that you submit to my Arguments, & do not reproach me for using

using such. I cannot bear reproaches. My spirits are not so high as to need being repressed. I must endeavour to seek amusement abroad, & fortunately many of my Friends are in town— among them, the Manwarings. You know how sincerely I regard both Husband & wife.

I am ever, Faithfully Yours

S. Vernon.

LETTER 31.

Lady Susan to Mrs Johnson.

Upper Seymour St.

My dear Friend,

That tormenting creature Reginald is here. My Letter, which was intended to keep him longer in the Country, has hastened him to Town. Much as I wish him away however,

I

I cannot help being pleased with such a proof of attachment. He is devoted to me, heart & soul. He will carry this note himself, which is to serve as an Introduction to you, with whom he longs to be acquainted. Allow him to spend the Evening with you, that I may be in no danger of his returning here. I have told him that I am not quite well, & must be alone—& should he call again there might be confusion, for it is impossible to be sure of servants. Keep him therefore I entreat you in Edward S^{t}. You will not find him a heavy companion, & I allow you to flirt with him as much as you like. At the same time do not forget my real interest; say all that you can to convince him that I shall be quite wretched if he remain here; you know my reasons—Propriety & so forth. I would urge them more myself, but that

I

I am impatient to be rid of him, as Manwaring comes within half an hour. Adeiu.

S. V.

LETTER 32.

Mrs Johnson to Lady Susan.

Edward St.

My dear Creature,

I am in agonies, & know not what to do, nor what *you* can do. Mr De Courcy arrived, just when he should not. Mrs Manwaring had that instant entered the House, & forced herself into her Guardian's presence, tho' I did not know a syllable of it till afterwards, for I was out when both she & Reginald came, or I would have sent him away at all events; but *she* was shut up with Mr Johnson, while *he* waited in the Drawing room for me.

 She

She arrived yesterday in pursuit of her Husband; but perhaps you know this already from himself. She came to this house to entreat my Husband's interference, & before I could be aware of it, everything that you could wish to be concealed, was known to him; & unluckily she had wormed out of Manwaring's servant that he had visited you every day since your being in Town, & had just watched him to your door herself! What could I do? Facts are such horrid things! All is by this time known to De Courcy, who is now alone with M^r Johnson. Do not accuse me; indeed, it was impossible to prevent it. M^r Johnson has for some time suspected De Courcy of intending to marry you, & would speak with him alone, as soon as he knew him to be in the House.

That detestable M^rs Manwaring, who for

for your comfort, has fretted herself thinner & uglier than ever, is still here, & they have been all closeted together. What can be done? If Manwaring is now with you, he had better be gone. At any rate I hope he will plague his wife more than ever. With anxious wishes,

Yrs faithfully

Alicia.

LETTER 33.

Lady Susan to Mrs Johnson.

Upper Seymour St.

This Eclaircissement is rather provoking. How unlucky that you should have been from home! I thought myself sure of you at 7. . I am undismayed however. Do not torment yourself with fears on my account. Depend upon

upon it, I can make my own story good with Reginald. Manwaring is just gone; he brought me the news of his wife's arrival. Silly Woman! what does she expect by such Manœuvres? Yet, I wish she had staid quietly at Langford.

Reginald will be a little enraged at first, but by Tomorrow's Dinner, everything will be well again.

Adeiu.

S. V.

LETTER 34.

Mr De Courcy to Lady Susan.

Hotel.

I write only to bid you Farewell. The spell is removed. I see you as you are. Since we parted yesterday, I have received from indisputable authority, such

such an history of you as must bring the most mortifying conviction of the Imposition I have been under, & the absolute necessity of an immediate & eternal separation from you. You cannot doubt to what I allude; Langford—Langford—that word will be sufficient. I received my information in M^r^ Johnson's house, from M^rs^ Manwaring herself.

You know how I have loved you, you can intimately judge of my present feelings; but I am not so weak as to find indulgence in describing them to a woman who will glory in having excited their anguish, but whose affection they have never been able to gain.

R. De Courcy.

LETTER

LETTER 35.

Lady Susan to M^r De Courcy.

Upper Seymour S^t.

I will not attempt to describe my astonishment on reading the note, this moment received from you. I am bewilder'd in my endeavours to form some rational conjecture of what M^rs Manwaring can have told you, to occasion so extraordinary a change in your sentiments. Have I not explained everything to you with respect to myself which could bear a doubtful meaning, & which the ill-nature of the World had interpreted to my Discredit? What can you *now* have heard to stagger your Esteem for me? Have I ever had a concealment from you? Reginald, you agitate me beyond

beyond expression. I cannot suppose that the old story of M^rs^ Manwaring's jealousy can be revived again, or at least, be *listened* to again. Come to me immediately, & explain what is at present absolutely incomprehensible. Believe me, the single word of *Langford* is not of such potent intelligence, as to supersede the necessity of more. If we *are* to part, it will at least be handsome to take your personal Leave. But I have little heart to jest; in truth, I am serious enough—for to be sunk, tho' but an hour, in your opinion, is an humiliation to which I know not how to submit. I shall count every moment till your arrival.

S. V.

LETTER

LETTER 36.

M^r De Courcy to Lady Susan.

Hotel.

Why would you write to me? Why do you require particulars? But since it must be so, I am obliged to declare that all the accounts of your misconduct during the life & since the death of M^r Vernon which had reached me in common with the World in general, & gained my entire beleif before I saw you, but which you by the exertion of your perverted Abilities had made me resolve to disallow, have been unanswerably proved to me. Nay, more, I am assured that a connection, of which I had never before entertained a thought, has for some time existed, & still continues to exist between you & the

the Man, whose family you robbed of it's Peace, in return for the hospitality with which you were received into it! That you have corresponded with him ever since your leaving Langford—not with his wife—but with him—and that he now visits you every day. Can you, dare you deny it? & all this at the time when I was an encouraged, an accepted Lover! From what have I not escaped! I have only to be grateful. Far from me be all complaint, & every sigh of regret. My own Folly has endangered me, my Preservation I owe to the kindness, the Integrity of another. But the unfortunate M^rs^ Manwaring, whose agonies while she related the past, seem'd to threaten her reason —how is *she* to be consoled?

After such a discovery as this, you will scarcely affect farther wonder at my meaning in bidding you Adeiu. My

Understanding is at length restored, & teaches me no less to abhor the Artifices which had subdued me, than to despise myself for the weakness, on which their strength was founded.

R. De Courcy.

LETTER 37.

Lady Susan to Mr De Courcy.

Upper Seymour St.

I am satisfied—& will trouble you no more when these few Lines are dismissed. The Engagement which you were eager to form a fortnight ago, is no longer compatible with your veiws, & I rejoice to find that the prudent advice of your Parents has not been given in vain. Your restoration to Peace will, I doubt not, speedily follow this

this act of filial Obedience, & I flatter myself with the hope of surviving *my* share in this disappointment.

S. V.

LETTER 38.

Mrs Johnson to Lady Susan.

Edward St.

I am greived, tho' I cannot be astonished at your rupture with Mr De Courcy ; he has just informed Mr Johnson of it by letter. He leaves London he says to-day. Be assured that I partake in all your feelings, & do not be angry if I say that our intercourse even by Letter must soon be given up. It makes me miserable—but Mr Johnson vows that if I persist in the connection, he will settle in the country for the rest of his life—& you know it is impossible

impossible to submit to such an extremity while any other alternative remains.

You have heard of course that the Manwarings are to part; I am afraid M^rs^ M. will come home to us again. But she is still so fond of her Husband & frets so much about him that perhaps she may not live long.

Miss Manwaring is just come to Town to be with her Aunt, & they say, that she declares she will have Sir James Martin before she leaves London again. If I were you, I would certainly get him myself. I had almost forgot to give you my opinion of De Courcy, I am really delighted with him, he is full as handsome I think as Manwaring, & with such an open, goodhumoured Countenance that one cannot help loving him at first sight. M^r^ Johnson & he are the greatest friends in the World

World. Adeiu, my dearest Susan. I wish matters did not go so perversely. That unlucky visit to Langford! But I dare say you did all for the best, & there is no defying Destiny.

Yr sincerely attached

Alicia.

LETTER 39.

Lady Susan to Mrs Johnson.

Upper Seymour St.

My dear Alicia

I yeild to the necessity which parts us. Under such circumstances you could not act otherwise. Our friendship cannot be impaired by it; & in happier times, when your situation is as independant as mine, it will unite us again in the same Intimacy as ever.

For

For this I shall impatiently wait; & meanwhile can safely assure you that I never was more at ease, or better satisfied with myself & everything about me, than at the present hour. Your Husband I abhor—Reginald I despise—& I am secure of never seeing either again. Have I not reason to rejoice? Manwaring is more devoted to me than ever; & were he at liberty, I doubt if I could resist even Matrimony offered by *him*. This Event, if his wife live with you, it may be in your power to hasten. The violence of her feelings, which must wear her out, may be easily kept in irritation. I rely on your friendship for this. I am now satisfied that I never could have brought myself to marry Reginald; & am equally determined that Frederica never *shall*. To-morrow I shall fetch her from Churchill, & let Maria Manwaring

waring tremble for the consequence. Frederica shall be Sir James's wife before she quits my house. *She* may whimper, & the Vernons may storm; I regard them not. I am tired of submitting my will to the Caprices of others—of resigning my own Judgement in deference to those, to whom I owe no Duty, & for whom I feel no respect. I have given up too much—have been too easily worked on; but Frederica shall now find the difference.

Adeiu, dearest of Friends. May the next Gouty Attack be more favourable. And may you always regard me as unalterably yours

S. Vernon.

LETTER

LETTER 40.

Lady De Courcy to M^rs Vernon.

Parklands.

My dear Catherine

I have charming news for you, & if I had not sent off my Letter this morning, you might have been spared the vexation of knowing of Reginald's being gone to Town, for he is returned, Reginald is returned, not to ask our consent to his marrying Lady Susan, but to tell us that they are parted forever! He has been only an hour in the House, & I have not been able to learn particulars, for he is so very low, that I have not the heart to ask questions; but I hope we shall soon know all. This is the most joyful hour he has ever given us, since the day of his birth. Nothing is wanting but to have you here, & it is our

our particular wish & entreaty that you would come to us as soon as you can. You have owed us a visit many long weeks. I hope nothing will make it inconvenient to M^r^ Vernon, & pray bring all my Grand Children, & your dear Neice is included of course ; I long to see her. It has been a sad heavy winter hitherto, without Reginald, & seeing nobody from Churchill ; I never found the season so dreary before, but this happy meeting will make us young again. Frederica runs much in my thoughts, & when Reginald has recovered his usual good spirits, (as I trust he soon will) we will try to rob him of his heart once more, & I am full of hopes of seeing their hands joined at no great distance.

Y^r^ affec: Mother

C. De Courcy.

LETTER 41.

Mrs Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

Churchill.

My dear Madam

Your Letter has surprised me beyond measure. Can it be true that they are really separated—& for ever? I should be overjoyed if I dared depend on it, but after all that I have seen, how can one be secure? And Reginald really with you! My surprise is the greater, because on Wednesday, the very day of his coming to Parklands, we had a most unexpected & unwelcome visit from Lady Susan, looking all chearfulness & good humour, & seeming more as if she were to marry him when she got back to Town, than as if parted from him for ever. She staid nearly two hours, was as affectionate

tionate & agreable as ever, & not a syllable, not a hint was dropped of any Disagreement or Coolness between them. I asked her whether she had seen my Brother since his arrival in Town—not as you may suppose with any doubt of the fact—but merely to see how she looked. She immediately answered without any embarrassment that he had been kind enough to call on her on Monday, but she beleived he had already returned home—which I was very far from crediting.

Your kind invitation is accepted by us with pleasure, & on Thursday next, we & our little ones will be with you. Pray Heaven! Reginald may not be in Town again by that time!

I wish we could bring dear Frederica too, but I am sorry to add that her Mother's errand hither was to fetch her away; & miserable as it made the poor Girl

Girl, it was impossible to detain her. I was thoroughly unwilling to let her go, & so was her Uncle; & all that could be urged, we *did* urge. But Lady Susan declared that as she was now about to fix herself in Town for several Months, she could not be easy if her Daughter were not with her, for Masters, &c. Her Manner, to be sure, was very kind & proper—& M^r^ Vernon beleives that Frederica will now be treated with affection. I wish I could think so too!

The poor girl's heart was almost broke at taking leave of us. I charged her to write to me very often, & to remember that if she were in any distress, we should be always her friends. I took care to see her alone, that I might say all this, & I hope made her a little more comfortable. But I shall not be easy till I can go to Town & judge of her situation myself.

I wish there were a better prospect than now appears, of the Match, which the conclusion of your Letter declares your expectation of. At present it is not very likely.

Y^rs &c.

CATH. VERNON.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION.

This Correspondence, by a meeting between some of the Parties & a separation between the others, could not, to the great detriment of the Post office Revenue, be continued longer. Very little assistance to the State could be derived from the Epistolary Intercourse of M^rs^ Vernon & her neice, for the former soon perceived by the stile of Frederica's Letters, that they were written under her Mother's inspection, & therefore deferring all particular enquiry till she could make it personally in Town, ceased writing minutely or often.

Having learnt enough in the meanwhile from her open-hearted Brother, of what had passed between him & Lady

Lady Susan to sink the latter lower than ever in her opinion, she was proportionably more anxious to get Frederica removed from such a Mother, & placed under her own care; & tho' with little hope of success, was resolved to leave nothing unattempted that might offer a chance of obtaining her Sister in law's consent to it. Her anxiety on the subject made her press for an early visit to London; & Mr Vernon who, as it must have already appeared, lived only to do whatever he was desired, soon found some accomodating Business to call him thither. With a heart full of the Matter, Mrs Vernon waited on Lady Susan, shortly after her arrival in Town; & was met with such an easy & chearful affection as made her almost turn from her with horror. No remembrance of Reginald, no consciousness of

Guilt

Guilt, gave one look of embarrassment. She was in excellent spirits, & seemed eager to shew at once, by every possible attention to her Brother and Sister, her sense of their kindness, & her pleasure in their society.

Frederica was no more altered than Lady Susan; the same restrained Manners, the same timid Look in the presence of her Mother as heretofore, assured her Aunt of her situation's being uncomfortable, & confirmed her in the plan of altering it. No unkindness however on the part of Lady Susan appeared. Persecution on the subject of Sir James was entirely at an end— his name merely mentioned to say that he was not in London; & in all her conversation she was solicitous only for the welfare & improvement of her Daughter, acknowledging in terms of grateful delight that Frederica was now growing

growing every day more & more what a Parent could desire.

Mrs Vernon surprised & incredulous, knew not what to suspect, & without any change in her own veiws, only feared greater difficulty in accomplishing them. The first hope of anything better was derived from Lady Susan's asking her whether she thought Frederica looked quite as well as she had done at Churchill, as she must confess herself to have sometimes an anxious doubt of London's perfectly agreeing with her.

Mrs Vernon encouraging the doubt, directly proposed her Neice's returning with them into the country. Lady Susan was unable to express her sense of such kindness; yet knew not from a variety of reasons how to part with her Daughter; & as, tho' her own plans were not yet wholly fixed, she trusted it

would ere long be in her power to take Frederica into the country herself, concluded by declining entirely to profit by such unexampled attention. Mrs Vernon however persevered in the offer of it, & tho' Lady Susan continued to resist, her resistance in the course of a few days seemed somewhat less formidable.

The lucky alarm of an Influenza, decided what might not have been decided quite so soon. Lady Susan's maternal fears were then too much awakened for her to think of anything but Frederica's removal from the risk of infection. Above all Disorders in the World, she most dreaded the Influenza for her daughter's constitution. Frederica returned to Churchill with her Uncle & Aunt, & three weeks afterwards Lady Susan announced her being married to Sir James Martin.

Mrs Vernon was then convinced of what she had only suspected before, that she might have spared herself all the trouble of urging a removal, which Lady Susan had doubtless resolved on from the first. Frederica's visit was nominally for six weeks; but her Mother, tho' inviting her to return in one or two affectionate Letters, was very ready to oblige the whole Party by consenting to a prolongation of her stay, & in the course of two months ceased to write of her absence, & in the course of two more, to write to her at all.

Frederica was therefore fixed in the family of her Uncle & Aunt, till such time as Reginald De Courcy could be talked, flattered & finessed into an affection for her—which, allowing leisure for the conquest of his attachment to her Mother, for his abjuring all

all future attachments & detesting the Sex, might be reasonably looked for in the course of a Twelvemonth. Three Months might have done it in general, but Reginald's feelings were no less lasting than lively.

Whether Lady Susan was, or was not happy in her second Choice—I do not see how it can ever be ascertained—for who would take her assurance of it, on either side of the question? The World must judge from Probability. She had nothing against her, but her Husband, & her Conscience.

Sir James may seem to have drawn an harder Lot than mere Folly merited. I leave him therefore to all the Pity that anybody can give him. For myself, I confess that *I* can pity only Miss Manwaring, who coming to Town & putting herself to an expence in Cloathes, which

which impoverished her for two years, on purpose to secure him, was defrauded of her due by a Woman ten years older than herself.

FINIS

NOTES

NOTES

1. *Variations, &c., in the Manuscript.*

Page 14 l. 2 dull *for* heavy
Page 22 l. 10 far from *for* not
Page 29 l. 13 a degree *for* this degree
Page 31 l. 1 attractive *for* pleasing
Page 66 l. 4 as soon as] as soon
Page 108 l. 7 in your own room *erased after* moment
l. 8 into my room *for* thither directly
Page 110 l. 1 occurred to] occurred
Page 117 l. 4 easy *for* at peace
Page 125 l. 7 *from foot* Flexibility *for* Weakness
Page 139 l. 7 state *for* posture
Page 142 l. 5 *from foot* Sensibilities *for* feelings

2. *Variations in the Edition of* 1871.

The edition of 1871 departed from the original in a large number of places. It seemed worth while to record these variations, which are of some importance for textual criticism.

A certain proportion of the corruptions are due either to misreading of the manuscript, or to inadvertence in copying [1] or in printing. From causes of this kind a number of places have been so corrupted as to destroy or pervert the sense. Examples are (p. 4) *apprehensions for myself* for *apprehensions myself*, (23) *any account* for *my account*, (54) *to Langford* for *from Langford*, (75) *prospect* for

[1] The autograph shows no sign of having passed through a printer's hands.

purport, (90) *remember the risk* for *must run the risk*.

Omission of single words is frequent, and in a number of places a whole phrase or sentence has dropped out. Some of these omissions are due to the well-known tendency for the eye to jump to the same or a similar word; examples are 135 (*I . . . I*), 145 (*do . . . do*), 147 (*done . . . gone*).

But there are also many changes which were deliberately made. Some of these are in the way of modernization; as *father* and *mother* for *Sir* and *Madam*, *London* for *Town*; (37) *if he chose* for *if he chose it*, (43) *approve of* for *approve*, (30) *do away with* for *do away*, (80) *gentlemanlike* for *genteel*, (89) *unspeakably great kindness* for *unspeakable great kindness*, (116) *before it was too late* for *before it were too late*, (144) *if he remains* for *if he remain*.

Page 1 l. 5 *and passim* Churchill] Churchhill
Page 2 l. 14 but too much] too much
Page 4 l. 1 *and passim* Manwaring] Mainwaring
l. 3 for myself
Page 6 l. 10 family] party
l. 18 N° 10] 10
Page 7 l. 2 Town] London
Page 8 l. 4 the Christmas] our Christmas
l. 8 Brother] brother-in-law
Page 9 l. 3 M^rs^ Manwaring] Mr. Mainwaring
Page 11 l. 4 unkindness] with unkindness
l. 7 Town] London
l. 13 would] could
l. 15 this] the
Page 12 l. 6 been always] always been
Page 13 l. 3 a M^r^ Smith] Mr. Smith
l. 7 *om.* in the house
l. 20 *om.* that
l. 21 come with] accompany
Page 14 l. 10 am] am ever

Page 15 l. 2 since] and since
Page 16 l. 2 *om.* half
l. 4 *from foot om.* then
Page 17 l. 10 on] upon
l. 17 their fortune] it
l. 19 Town] London
Page 20 l. 13 necessarily] naturally
Page 21 l. 7 so long been convinced of] been so long convinced to
l. 18 whatever] what
Page 22 l. 4 three months there] there for months
Page 23 l. 2 true] correct
l. 5 *from foot* a doubt of the warmth of that friendship] any doubt of the warmth of your affection
last line any account] my account
Page 24 l. 4 many hours] much
l. 6 to be] to have
l. 10 *my*] my
l. 14 those accomplishments] the accomplishments
l. 18 in all the Languages] of all languages
ll. 21, 22 and *added before* German *and before* drawing
Page 26 l. 2 about] of
l. 6 mixture] instance
l. 9 great] good
l. 11 answer] reconcile
l. 2 *from foot om.* most
Page 27 l. 4 that] which
l. 5 of familiarity] and familiarity
Page 29 l. 2 Madam] mother
Page 30 l. 19 do away] do away with
Page 31 l. 10 struck] much struck
Page 33 l. 3 advise] I advise
Page 36 l. 5 opposed to] opposed by
l. 18 calm] cool
Page 37 l. 17 chose it] chose
l. 18 towards] to

Page 37 l. 20 kind] sort
l. 21 *my*] my
Page 38 l. 1 already as much attached to another person] attached to another person as much
l. 18 be otherwise] otherwise be
l. 20 her Husband's insipid talk] the insipid talk of her husband
Page 40 l. 1 veiws] plans
l. 3 under] on
l. 19 to Churchill] here
l. 21 in a warmth] with a warmth
Page 41 l. 1 *om.* ever
l. 9 to myself] for myself
l. 16 affec:ly] &c.
Page 42 l. 13 In] and in
Page 43 l. 6 approve] approve of
l. 16 account] amount
Page 44 l. 11 marrying] marriage with
l. 13 *om.* my dear Reginald
l. 15 your wife] a wife
l. 19 so fixed as that no objection can be made to either] fixed so that no objection can be made to it, then
Page 45 l. 2 probable] possible
l. 4 *om.* that
l. 5 a wish] the wish
l. 17 should] could
Page 48 l. 17 has] he has
Page 51 l. 5 Sir] father
l. 10 no veiw] no other view
l. 14 mental] intellectual
Page 52 l. 1 those] the
l. 14 absolutely] wholly
l. 16 motive] motives
Page 53 l. 6 temptation] temptations
l. 10 scandalous] slanderous
l. 2 *from foot om.* that
Page 54 l. 7 miserable] wretched

Page 54 l. 12 earnest] urgent
l. 13 *om.* that
l. 15 from Langford] to Langford
l. 18 every] any
l. 20 *om.* reasoning
Page 56 l. 1 Sir] father
Page 58 l. 10 afflicting] distressing
l. 17 Town] London
Page 59 l. 9 *om.* she talks
l. 14 anybody] anyone
Page 60 l. 7 endeavour] *endeavour*
l. 9 been often] often been
Page 61 l. 3 an Higher] a higher
l. 2 *from foot* intentions] intention
Page 62 l. 5 acquaintance] acquaintances
shall be punished] shall be punished
l. 16 private] previous
l. 19 *should*] should
l. 20 from her] out of her
Page 63 l. 3 *from foot one*] one
Page 64 l. 6 doubting] doubtful
l. 9 compare] all compare
l. 12 quite] much
l. 17 *om.* me forbid] forbade
end add. Yours ever
Page 65 l. 13 *om.* in my life
Page 67 l. 3 because] for
l. 20 untractable] intractable
Page 68 l. 1 now] can
Page 69 l. 3 *practising* it is called] practising as it is called
l. 7 *om.* in the room
last line —still] and still
Page 70 l. 6 sign] signs
l. 2 *from foot om.* that
Page 71 l. 5 *om.* for her own justification
l. 8 accuse] excuse
l. 11 I am] I remain
l. 4 *from foot* Madam] Mother

Page 72 l. 2 that] which
l. 3 impression] impressions
l. 15 with] into
l. 3 *from foot* escape] escapes
l. 2 *from foot him*] him
Page 73 l. 5 Madam] mother
l. 13 accomplishment] accomplishments
l. 18 *om.* now *did*] did
Page 74 l. 8 Her] and her
l. 10 Y^rs^ affec:^ly^] Your affectionate Daughter
Page 75 l. 3 reason] cause
l. 6 purport] prospect
l. 8 *om.* without considering . . . Wigmore Street
l. 19 *om.* Susanna
Page 76 l. 7 *om.* what are
l. 12 *om.* now
l. 19 likewise] also
Page 77 l. 1 lively] acute
l. 4 ridiculed] ridiculous
l. 12 she would] and she would
Page 78 l. 4 *om.* since
l. 11 that] this
l. 12 resolved] decided
l. 15 forward] on
l. 18 therefore must] must therefore
Page 79 l. 12 cried] said
l. 13 what am I to do] what shall I do
Page 80 l. 11 genteel] gentlemanlike
l. 12 *om.* to me
Page 81 l. 12 good deal] great deal
Page 82 l. 5 *from foot You*] you
l. 3 *from foot* warmly] extremely
l. 2 *from foot* exist no longer] not exist longer
Page 83 l. 3 *Rattle*] rattle
l. 13 while] whilst
Page 84 l. 1 *om.* on it

Page 85 l. 3 *om.* her
Page 86 l. 9 said] says
l. 12 *om.* first
Page 87 l. 5 soon] very soon
l. 9 wishes] wished
l. 12 her Uncle & I] I and her uncle
l. 14 she must not be even left] and she must not be left
Page 88 l. 3 before] to
l. 7 Madam] mother
Page 89 l. 1 ever] even
l. 2 or] and
l. 6 *om.* only
l. 7 *you*] you
l. 13 unspeakable] unspeakably
Page 90 l. 5 must run] remember
Page 91 l. 4 *from foot om.* perfectly
l. 3 *from foot that*] such
Page 92 l. 6 had] has
l. 8 *om.* had
Page 93 l. 6 Frederica's] Frederica
l. 5 *from foot* whence I had least reason to apprehend] where I had least reason to expect
Page 94 l. 4 *her*] her inclination] inclinations
l. 7 required an explanation, & begged] begged an explanation, and desired
l. 17 gave] had given
Page 95 l. 2 assure] to assure
l. 7 from] by
l. 15 she] *she*
l. 18 had] has
Page 96 l. 4 or] and
l. 3 *from foot more*] more
Page 97 l. 8 his reflections be] be his reflections
Page 98 l. 2 *from foot* lines] short lines
Page 99 l. 10 Madam] mother
last line voice] tone

Page 100 l. 12 *He*] he
l. 2 *from foot om.* ever
Page 101 l. 1 knew] know
Page 102 l. 3 *from foot om.* I hope
Page 103 l. 3 know] hear
last line om. but two hours ago
Page 104 l. 1 only two hours ago *added after* happy is vanished] has vanished
l. 9 almost] all but
l. 16 I then] and then
Page 105 l. 1 angry] very angry with me
l. 3 replied I] I replied
l. 10 that *you*] you
l. 3 *from foot his*] his
l. 2 *from foot om.* wishing
Page 106 l. 2 I] and
l. 6 *om.* own
l. 13 *om.* that
l. 17 *me*] me
l. 20 & I] or I
Page 107 l. 1 goodness] kindness
l. 3 *om.* that
l. 6 going] going away
l. 9 replied I] I replied
Page 108 l. 1 on seeing] at seeing
l. 3 said I] I said
l. 5 replied he] he replied
l. 6 *not*] not
l. 9 continued he] he continued
l. 4 *from foot* Frederica] she
l. 2 *from foot* therefore does not always know] does not always know, therefore
Page 109 l. 1 *I*] I
l. 8 replied I] I replied
l. 10 remarks] comments
l. 15 not I] I not
l. 4 *from foot om.* that
Page 110 l. 15 these] those

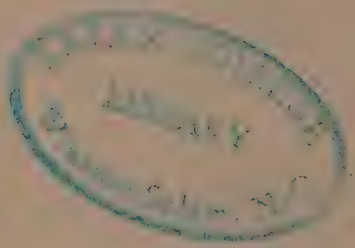
Page 111 l. 4 under par] below par
l. 6 the worse] worse
l. 7 the abilities] and the abilities
l. 9 so much] as much
l. 12 alone should] should alone
l. 15 She is besides] And besides she is
l. 16 *om.* she scarcely loves me
l. 20 *om.* entirely
Page 112 l. 5 *that*] that
Page 113 l. 1 must you] you must
l. 2 *from foot* for hers] nor for hers
last line Where] When
Page 114 l. 5 *om.* to be
l. 8 misapprehension] misconception
l. 9 not you] you not
Page 115 l. 1 *om.* that
l. 11 was] is
l. 4 *from foot* as less] less
Page 116 l. 7 perhaps been] been perhaps
l. 10 were too late] was too late
l. 3 *from foot* ever, tho' so innocently] even, though innocently
Page 117 l. 6 owed] owe
Page 118 l. 7 *from foot* Madam] mother
Page 119 l. 9 *from foot* again my self] my ownself
l. 2 *from foot om.* This Reginald has a proud spirit of his own
Page 120 l. 10 have] leave
l. 12 resentful] so revengeful
Page 121 l. 10 to you] for you
Page 122 l. 5 *from foot I*] I
l. 3 *from foot you*] you
Page 124 l. 4 *om.* our
l. 2 *from foot* humiliations] humiliation
Page 125 l. 12 own Character] character
l. 2 *from foot* whims] notions
last line inclination] inclinations
Page 127 l. 2 *from foot you*] you
Page 128 l. 5 *om.* yourself

Page 128 l. 6 Town] London
l. 2 *from foot* for you] to you
Page 129 l. 11 have] to have
l. 12 he once] once he
l. 16 could] should
l. 17 *om.* very
Page 130 l. 6 was always] always was
l. 9 he] and he
One] one
l. 14. his] *his*
l. 16 Yours] Yours ever
Page 131 l. 5 *She*] She
l. 6 Town] London
last line om. in short
Page 132 l. 1 *there*] there
l. 2 *om.* even
l. 3 *om.* all
l. 4 a very bad set I doubt not *misplaced after* mixed
l. 12 at peace] in peace
l. 13 Our] and our
l. 14 conversation] conversations
Page 133 l. 7 Town] London
l. 8 *om.* that
l. 11 a something] something
l. 18 Yours affec[ly]] Your affectionate, &c.
Page 135 l. 1 *om.* I have received yours, & have engaged the Lodgings in consequence
l. 9 see you] come to you
Page 136 l. 6 a Nurse] as nurse
ll. 11, 12 *om.* & (*twice*)
Page 137 l. 9 or] nor
l. 17 Marriage] marrying
Page 139 l. 3 or] nor
l. 13 Precipitance] precipitation
Page 140 l. 2 expectation] expectations
l. 5 *from foot* an Union] a union
Page 141 l. 13 *you*] you

Page 143 l. 4 *om.* abroad
l. 6 among] amongst
l. 9 ever] very
Page 144 l. 3 *from foot* if he remain] if he remains
Page 145 l. 11 *from foot om.* nor what *you* can do
l. 4 *from foot* would] should
Page 147 l. 4 *om.* If Manwaring is now with you, he had better be gone
Page 148 l. 1 upon] on
om. own
Page 149 l. 1 an history] a history
Page 150 l. 2 on] in
Page 151 l. 7 *Langford*] Langford
l. 14 but an hour] but for an hour
opinion] esteem
an humiliation] a humiliation
l. 16 moment] minute
Page 152 l. 11 resolve] resolved
Page 153 l. 12 *om.* &
Page 154 l. 2 *om.* me
Page 155 l. 2 *my*] my
Page 156 l. 5 I am] and I am
l. 7 *from foot* De Courcy] Mr. De Courcy
Page 157 l. 6 *from foot om.* such
Page 158 l. 10 he] we
Page 159 l. 3 *She*] and *she*
l. 12 find] feel
Page 160 *om.* Parklands
l. 6 Town] London
l. 9 *om.* that
Page 162 l. 1 Madam] Mother
l. 3 *from foot* back to Town] to London
Page 163 l. 3 *from foot* add] say
Page 164 l. 4 *did*] did
l. 6 Town] London
Page 165 l. 4 expectation] expectations
l. 6 Y^{rs}] Yours ever
Page 166 l. 6 longer] any longer
l. 14 Town] London

VARIATIONS IN THE EDITION OF 1871

Page 167 l. 12 have already] already have
Page 168 l. 11 situation's] situation
l. 18 &] and indeed
Page 170 l. 5 however persevered] persevered, however,
Page 172 l. 13 Probability] probabilities
l. 17 an harder] a harder



PRINTED IN ENGLAND
AT THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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